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# GENTLEFOLKS

AND

## OTHERS

BY

JULIA DUHRING

AUTHOR OF "PHILOSOPHERS AND FOOLS."

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CRITIC.—So you think you understand life, do you?

AUTHOR.—Pardon me—my words must have caused a misapprehension. I understand nothing. I simply report things seen from one standpoint. From another position, doubtless, my testimony would be widely different.

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PHILADELPHIA

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1876

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TO  
MY MOTHER  
CAROLINE DUHRING

Should I speak here of the tenderest of hearts, of the most refined of thoughts, of the staunchest of principles,—of these as embodied in one sacred name and consecrated throughout the past and in the present to all womanly deeds? No,—leaving unsaid the countless things I would fain have the whole world know, I offer to you pages which but for your loving care of the hand that writes, never could have seen the light.



## PREFACE

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\*MEN and women interest us in proportion to what we know of them. Form, feature, movement, speech and conduct, tell us one half: surroundings, education, occupation and results attained, tell the other half. From the whole we come to see how curious a mixture of inherited traits, of special endowments, of world-influences, of self-control and of self-indulgence we all are. How far we are responsible for the coloring of our own lives, how far for that of other lives, are questions to be answered only after careful observation and impartial deductions.

Looking at Human Nature with a sincere desire to learn its meaning, I can see no truth of so vital an importance as individual development. That this belief does not necessarily produce beautiful effects or noble works, I should be prompt to admit. But if you and I give of our best and continue the pursuit of something still better, can more than this be demanded?

PHILADELPHIA, 1416 SPRUCE STREET.

May, 1876.



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## I.

# GENTLEFOLKS.

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WHO does not like Gentlefolks—like to know them, to be with them, to hear of them? And why not? If it be laudable to value and seek the best animals, the best fruits, the best fabrics, why not the best people? In common phrase, “Gentlefolks are no better than other folks.” True enough: but true only from one point. Viewed on all sides, they are not simply better, but immeasurably better, than other folks. They look better, behave better. They see more, reflect more, feel more. What they say has greater weight, what they do greater effect. They read their fellow-men, not by their clothes or their houses, but by their personality and conduct. And they read thus, not in a spirit of criticism, but to bring about a just and amicable intercourse.

They do not profess belief in equality as a fraternizing of rudeness and gentleness. They did not make the distinctions of social life: they found them already made. They accept them as an arrangement for which they are not responsible beyond the performance of their own part.

Who are Gentlefolks? How are they to be recognized? What part do they play in the world?

First of all, they are physically superior. Not that stature, muscle, and features are of special quality; it is the bearing, the controlling, the adapting of the physique which exact our admiration.

They walk with firm, elastic step; one which obeys volition readily, spiritedly, gracefully. It is a degree of the same pleasure we derive from witnessing good riding, swimming, dancing, or any other form of motion. Comparing a given number of men subjected to military drill with the same number taken from commerce or mechanics, we quickly detect the value of drill applied to walking. Does not the first glance at a crowded thoroughfare show every grade of striding, mincing, shuffling, dragging, swaggering, strutting? And do not these motions clearly signal special tidings of character and circumstance? Prosperity, adversity, resolution, vacillation, energy, sluggishness—these and similar conditions or traits speak plainly enough from a man's ordinary walk.

With women the case is somewhat different. The costume of modern civilization, however great a hindrance to natural ease of movement, has a very decided negative advantage. It lends a friendly disguise to many characteristics which the walk would otherwise reveal. And women, amid the anomalous exactions of their position, surely require more than one aid to harmless dissimulation. Yet, aside from trammels or advantages of dress, a woman's walk is very expressive of good- or ill-breeding, as well as of predominant traits of mind or temperament.

Gentlefolks know, too, the art of standing—how to make it express cessation of motion, but cessation with instant facility of starting again. The ground



under their feet gives forth a right of possession for the moments or hours it is held. The ownership is manifest in the equipoise of the body, in its firmness of posture. There is no swaying to and fro, no balancing of arms and legs, no irresolute turning of the head this way and that way, no vacant gazing at surroundings, no implied tendency to loll, lean, or topple over.

So when sitting they seem at ease, in repose, in a state of comfort. To speak of it suggests but little of the thing itself. But to see it, means the sense of fitness that comes from control of muscle, of thought, of feeling. To sit still is apparently as rare an accomplishment among ordinary people as among children. To see the diverse modes of lounging, of wriggling, of fidgeting, of twisting the body, produces a sensation of positive uneasiness. It gives the impression of the body's wishing to get away, to escape, to try something else.

To know the infinite phases of character the human form may be taught to express, we need only glance at works of art, whether painting or sculpture. Not that we are to go to Art to learn of what Nature is capable: but one helps the other. Artists go to Nature for studies, go there with reverent minds, with skilful hands, with esthetic souls. They embody the idea, the sentiment, the attitude, the emotions reflected upon form and countenance. They know far more and do far more towards expressing character than other men. For this reason, then, we go to their works for help in our study of man. Under all the absorbing interest of Art, beyond all its toil, we find subtle truths of psychology which force us into

contemplation of the original of Art,—of Nature herself.

The face ! What more than this shows the effect of culture ? Every thought, every feeling, every action, leaves its trace, and eventually stamps it as belonging to a distinct class. There may be contradiction, inconsistency, many varied shades of goodness or badness in the same face. Yet, the predominant tendency of the individual is clearly interlined, legible to the most casual observer. A face is an epitome of character. Among well-bred people, the plainest of features acquire a benevolence which conciliates, a dignity which compels deference, a force which exacts respect.

The brow gives the effect of breadth, calmness, reflection. It has its phases of displeasure, indignation, trouble—but they disappear with the exciting causes. Such phases, being occasional, not habitual, do not imprint the frown or the scowl which awakens suspicion, fear, repulsion.

The eye is clear, observant, but unobtrusive. It sees all within range—countless grades of beauty and deformity—yet without abusing its penetration by even a semblance of inquisition. In ordinary world-intercourse its strength is veiled ; its rays are only those of kindness, courtesy, charity, sympathy, tolerance. But upon special occasions it can speak eloquently of confidence, love, joy ; of mistrust, dislike, pain. It can attract or repulse, inspire or subdue, melt with tenderness or burn with passion.

The mouth, too, means far more than rosy, well-cut, or classic. Whoever does not know the subtle delight of reading character on cultured lips loses that which

no book, no science, no art, can replace. Such lips make language the most vital and diversified of social arts. Even in repose they interpret the inner self with clearer verdict than any written page could express. They are at once mobile and firm. They vary with every thought or emotion, yet repress every undue demonstration of opinion, desire, or imagination.

They attract and yet control the object thus attracted. They are capable of giving forth all the chords of the soul, ranging from the sweetest strains of love to the angriest hissing of hatred.

Culture develops many sides of character. Therefore the lips of the same individual may be capable of alternate trust and suspicion, assent and denial, like and dislike, buoyancy and gloom, deference and scorn.

If once we have discovered the secret of communing with such lips, we can no more become enamored of a mere pretty mouth than of a statue or picture.

Form and color are a primitive kind of beauty calculated to attract untutored tastes. In the child, in the youth or maiden, they seem sufficient for satisfaction. With growth of character, more is demanded. If we may have symmetry of form and agreeable color as an enclosure for the soul, we accept it gratefully. If we may choose one only, we take the gem without the fine setting.

The nose, the chin, the ear! Have these anything to say beyond their form? Surely, exclaim many voices, these features cannot express character, any phase of breeding! Yet who can listen to the lan-

guage of daily life without being forcibly struck with the general belief in what those seemingly inanimate features say!

One man says of another:

"He has no chin! No wonder he is so irresolute!"

Or, of a woman:

"Rather pretty, but with so little nose that we cannot in reason expect any force, any depth of character."

Or, of ears ill shaped, or ill placed:

"Nature means something by that blemish!"

Who can deny that nose, chin, and ear have their own special expression, one which usually harmonizes with, and only occasionally contradicts, the other features? Yet, when subjected to the general sway of culture their physical disproportion loses its unsightliness.

I would not assert that classic features are the special prerogative of Gentlefolks; but that their privilege is, to make features subordinate to character.

Hands likewise tell their story. There is one hand which, in its very conformation, illustrates grace, beauty, tenderness. Another as plainly indicates awkwardness, rudeness, brutality. Or, there is the strong, decisive hand, sure of what it wants, prompt to seize and hold. Or, the weak, irresolute hand, kind always but sluggishly inactive.

The custom of hand-shaking is not without due significance. To people of fine sensibilities the slightest touch of a strange hand reveals something of personality. The energetic, the languid, the wiry, the laborious, the artistic, the inventive, the shrewd, the flaccid, the heartless hand—all give their key-

note at the first touch. If we have ears to hear that note of warning, we need ask no questions.

Hand-shaking is often a ceremony to be dreaded, so diverse are the grades of coarseness it reveals. Worst of all is the cold, inflexible, clammy touch of a selfish nature. Best of all is the warm, thrilling, life-giving touch of a generous soul. And this best of hands is found solely among men and women of good-breeding. There we must look for the hand which knows how to give the fitting greeting. Not that it is alike to all men. Heaven forbid such equality! But to each man it gives his due. From the humble dependant up to the cherished friend there is no cause for complaint, no suspicion of hauteur, no betrayal of trust or affection.

Not merely in the greeting but in an infinite variety of services does the hand evince its deftness, its delicacy, its refinement. It may not always be true to itself. Indisposition of body or mind; unwonted cares or anxieties; the pressure of affairs or the absorption of the intellect, may at times produce less skill, less warmth, less generosity in the hand. But judging as we would be judged, we take the average, not the one abnormal act or occasion.

Mentally, Gentlefolks are superior to others. Whatever the actual calibre of their intellect, it receives the kind of training suited to its special work. It may not be able to invent a machine, to write a poem, to make a discovery in science. But it has the faculty of appreciation, of looking with respect at all men and at all women in their several positions, of doing them equal justice. It is cosmopolitan. It is broad,

liberal, helpful. It regards every other intellect, not as a rival, but as useful or ornamental in its special place. It knows human nature too well to expect good judgment among the masses: therefore encourages every barrier which law deems best for restraining and guiding men.

The facts, the impressions, the deductions forced upon the mind by a knowledge of society, cannot be averted. Gentlefolks approximate philosophers in one point: they accept the world as it is.

Classes of men, grades of intellect, degrees of moral force—these are acknowledged as existing, as having always been, as being predestined to continue. The Why and the Wherefore of things may be deeply interesting to speculative minds; but they in no way change the differences in men practically thrust before us.

The one essential distinction of an intellect subjected to good-breeding, is its capacity to discriminate. Good and bad, beautiful and ugly, virtuous and vicious, are not glibly discussed as if they were things of choice or purchase. They are regarded as inevitable belongings of certain people, qualifications of their birth, circumstances, or opportunities. Nor does this faculty of observing the varied phases of society generate pride or self-righteousness. The same eye that notes imbecility of mind or vulgarity of manner, apprehends that causes produced those effects—causes for the most part wholly beyond the control of the individual.

No merit can be attached to the possession of a clear mind. Nor can any reproach be adduced to one befogged by ignorance. Yet, to prevent admira-

tion in the one case, or pity in the other, would be as impossible as unwise.

The higher the spirit of the human animal, the greater the need of a close watch and a strong arm in its training. Perhaps one of the most curious facts of social life is the far more general appreciation of thorough-bred brutes than of thorough-bred human beings.

The very lowest classes know the value of training applied to purely physical culture. The pugilist, the pedestrian, the oarsman, the acrobat, the rifleman—these appeal to their sympathies in proportion to skill and hardihood. Admiration carried to wild enthusiasm often comes from the populace whenever the muscular hero of the day fulfils their expectations.

In view of a physical contest, the utmost precaution attests the importance attached to preparation. What extreme care in the choice of a trainer! What vigilance over his charge! What self-denial on the part of the individual in course of training! None too much, however. A single lapse of discipline damages the aspirant's chances, lessens the number of his adherents. Food, drink, sleep, exercise—these, in conjunction with native force, decide the probable chances for victory or defeat.

But training as applicable to character, is to plebeians an unknown science. To the next classes in social status it is a matter of words, seasons, prices. Only by aristocrats, the best of human kind, is training recognized as the acme of civilization.

Morally, Gentlefolks have advantages over others.

Who would maintain the absurdity that people born amid poverty and vice are equally favored with people

born amid plenty and virtue? And the differences of outward life are accurately typified in the inward life.

Gentlefolks are not of necessity eminent moralists. But they are from birth subjected to the restraints of moral training. They have good teachers, good associations, good company. They are taught the great lesson of responsibility—its relations to their property, to their dependants, to their inferiors, to their equals. For the most part they are born with morality of native soundness and subjected from birth to influences favorable for the growth of that morality.

The term moralist in itself is of slight importance. I form a code of morals consonant with mental perceptions, with calibre of conscience. Other people do the same. Savages, despots, plebeians, rogues—all have a code of morals which they are quick to apply to others if not to themselves. Before attaching undue value, then, to the word moralist, it is well to know by what manner of man it is used. If genuine, morality is an outgrowth of reason and conscience, a result of reflection turned upon experience. It is an influence which urges a man to live out his conception of truth. It fills him with reverence for his own nature, for all men's natures. It reveals to him the Unseen through the Seen. It makes him listen reverently, not only to one voice of Nature, but to many voices. From this influence spring the lofty aspirations, the noble deeds, the enduring works which animate human lives.

The same man might, in the course of his career, give many diverse accounts of his moral condition. At one epoch a staunch adherent of the most cere-



monious of sects; at another, wholly indifferent to forms and emblems; at another, willing to believe that germs of truth exist in all sects, ceremonies, and symbols. And so closely allied are the mental and moral states of being, that he may be alternately an idealist, a materialist, a practical worker, a philosopher.

Morality seems as much a native growth of character as intellect, as temperament. If so, it is then an absurdity to try to mould all men and women upon one set of ideas. The moral training which best suits the class or the individual surely proves the one consonant with reason. Do not all beings of average moral capacity wish to do well, to make the most of life, to carry out as far as may be their ideas of work, of love, of charity? Are we not like children, willing enough to be "good" if shown how to be so against the fearful odds of strong inclinations, prejudices, passions? Are we not glad to be guarded from immorality if something else be provided in its place? A moralist need abate nothing of his conviction or zeal because it is invested with gentleness. Dealing as fairly with other heads and hearts as with his own, he speedily arrives at the goal called Tolerance. To know that an immoral act is as natural to one man as a moral one is to another, wholly disarms judgment of bitterness and wrath.

Without the checks of good-breeding a moralist continually treads upon his neighbor's rights—rights acquired through inherited conditions of mind and soul. To mean well towards others cannot justify our intrusion upon them at unseasonable hours, by disagreeable modes. Before we can expect our morality

to affect others in the least favorably, we must let it testify to its intrinsic worth by its acting upon ourselves.

Physique, Intellect, Morale — these, dexterously combined, make that all-potent magic called Manner.

If of refined tastes, we are naturally repulsed by coarseness, wherever found. Bluntness of speech, uncouth ways, discourteous acts, produce marked painful sensations which no effort of reasoning can dispel. Yet, if these sensations be made manifest by voice, eye, tongue, or gesture, are we not as much wanting in true delicacy as the offender himself? Indeed, more so. For in the one case there would be absolute ignorance of offence, in the other a full knowledge of its cause.

Good manners often require us to endure positive suffering rather than wound the feelings of others, lose our possible influence over them, or rudely jar upon their prejudices.

In asking a favor, I may possibly care little whether it be granted or not, but am strongly impressed by the manner of the reply. If it be courteous, denial is easily borne; but if rude and bitter, philosophy itself offers no consolation. And it is very safe to assume that my manner affects others precisely in the same way. To assume grace, dignity, or gentleness, produces a mannerism which justly draws upon us sarcasm or contempt. But to be habitually considerate of others' defects, faults, and opinions, is as great a virtue as curbing temper or restraining appetites.

A vein of refinement in a family is a possession to be proud of. It never appears in the same degree in different members. Sex, temperament, mental

capacity, accidental circumstances of care or neglect—these bring about divers grades of the metal. But the essential qualities—these remain. Even covered over with a growth of degenerated character—say in either of the parents—it is still likely to appear again in son or daughter.

Refinement can never be wholly eradicated. Traces of it appear in most unlooked-for ways, in oddest places, in most unpromising exteriors. It appears on the very threshold of a dwelling, in the dress of its owner, in his occupation, in his amusements. No word, no gesture, no action, is too trivial to be influenced by it.

No,—Gentlefolks do not grow naturally. They are a product of culture, and this only in an advanced state of society. A new settlement in a wild country may show us good, hard-working, energetic people, but not—Gentlefolks. These can be produced only after the drudgery of frontier-life has subsided. What Mrs. Trollope once said of us might be applied to every newly-settled land:

“No one will be disappointed who visits the country, expecting to find no more than common sense might teach him to look for, namely, a vast continent, by far the greater part of which is still in the state in which nature left it, and a busy, bustling, industrious population, hacking and hewing their way through it.”

Good-Breeding is of slow growth. It comes of Thought, of Feeling, of Practice.

Of people in general it might be said:

They have not time to be well-bred or to make their children so.

Toiling for very existence, who could expect them

to know aught of the diverse strata in the human character which finally yield that valuable gem of society which no money can purchase—Refinement!

Gentlefolks can never be plentiful in a community. The conditions of growth require too great an amount of care, of time, of culture, before marked characteristics appear.

In viewing a noble group of trees, I do not impair admiration by minute inquiries as to dimension, shape, and utility of every separate tree. I take in the whole, give myself up fully to the thoughts and sentiments awakened. A special technical description would only mar the nobility expressed by the entire group.

So, it seems to me, Gentlefolks are to be viewed. Without volition on their part, without effort, they hold a certain prominence in society. No two among them are alike. Their circumstances, appearance, attainments, influence—all are of varied form and effect. But as a class they merit respect, merit it because representing the best-endowed, best-cultured among human beings. They show us of what delightful degrees of social culture men, women, and children are capable. They make us feel at ease. They awaken thought, sentiment, emulation. They appeal through their very presence to the finer parts of our nature. Not only through their presence: even to hear them spoken of, to hear of their ways and acts, elevates the mind, refines the manner, provokes a spirit of gentleness.

I know they are not exempt from weaknesses and follies. But they do not thrust them at me, do not describe them, do not vaunt them. Among legions of people who cross my path, I can know but a hand-

ful intimately. Of the rest I know the exterior only. But in view of the multifarious social and business relations which come to even the most unimportant of individuals, that exterior is by no means a slight matter. It includes the diverse effects caused by cleanliness, slovenliness, politeness, incivility, modesty, impudence. It includes every expression of temper, every shade of manner, every form of grace, of awkwardness.

I do not say that all of us can acquire good manners simply through beholding them in others. But I do believe that all of us can cultivate a far more agreeable way of saying and doing things than we now possess. The best forms of speech, the best modes of action, the best esthetic tastes—these are within reach of every one endowed with quick intelligence and fine intuitions. Many men—perhaps even more women—of plebeian birth astonish the world by their strikingly aristocratic bearing. Not that it has been easy of acquisition. It came only through close observation, exceeding care, unremitting watchfulness. But surely this ambition is quite as legitimate—in its way quite as useful even—as intellectual or moral eminence.

Gentlefolks everywhere! What do we not owe them? With what profound gratitude do I not recall those known in bygone days! With what infinite comfort do I not bask in the society of those to-day known to me! What matters it where they live? how they look? in what fashion clothed? to which “set” in the community they belong? to which work they are pledged?

What I care for is *themselves*, the dear gentle folks who by their suavity and tenderness counteract the

crudity and acerbity of other people. I see that they are many-sided in their nature, capable of great extremes of wisdom and folly. They do many strange, many unrighteous things. They often spend more money than they should; live in houses too fine; dress in clothes too costly; entertain too lavishly. They manifest very puerile weaknesses for books they do not read; for pictures they do not look at; for porcelain and plate not made for use. They travel when, were it not for custom's sake, they would far rather stay at home. They yield to idleness when they ought to be industrious. They revel in luxury when multitudes around them are pining for want of simple necessities. They sometimes even let other people do their thinking.

In brief, Gentlefolks, however superior, bear yet a striking family likeness to other folks in the persistency with which they strive to make life yield up its sweets and treasures. They *are* superior; but this by no means implies that they are of a different race, angelic in attributes, divine in deeds. With every earthly advantage, they yet prove conclusively that the present stage of human existence is not meant to be one of perfection. They are not uniformly consistent, not abstractly good, not absolutely faultless. They are then to be sought after, admired, loved, not because they are superhuman, but simply because they are so much more admirable and lovable than other human beings.

Why be ashamed of our race because we discover that the best among us are not immaculate? Surely the sternest moralist among them all—whether in past or present—confesses that living a good life is far

less easy than to write or preach about it—that, with every available safeguard and precaution, men and women continue to evince many traits perhaps in themselves very natural, but pronounced by the standard in vogue as reprehensible, base, or unholy!

Gentlefolks may join in the universal human chorus so quaintly interpreted by Burton:

“We are not here as those angels, celestial powers and bodies, sun and moon, to finish our course without all offence, with such constancy, to continue for so many ages; but subject to infirmities, miseries, interrupted, tossed and tumbled up and down, carried about with every small blast, often molested and disquieted upon each slender occasion, uncertain, brittle, and so is all that we trust unto.”

They may thus chant, and yet do it in a far less discordant tone than that of the untaught mass.

Upon the whole, Gentlefolks have their full share of discomfort and chagrin. These are indeed inevitable penalties of quick intelligence and refined tastes. Such an organization makes pleasure and pain equally keen. Words, looks, acts, incidents, have power to produce varied degrees of peace or unrest, delight or torture. Gentlefolks, moreover, are not exempt from the hard, ugly facts of life. Bread must be earned or hunger endured. Misfortunes come trooping in when least expected, often through the ignorance or perversity of others. They must live outwardly as the laws and customs of their country require. In doing so they must mingle largely with people of every condition. And in this mingling for purposes of business, or benevolence, or expediency, they endure

the most onerous part. They must behold the human countenance in its myriad forms of distortion through passion and debased habits; see the human form shorn of its symmetry and elasticity, doomed to plod, shuffle, crawl, sneak, or prowl; hear the human voice bereft of every musical tone, degraded into an instrument which jars upon thought, racks sensibility, destroys the soul's harmony.

It is not the artist only who possesses esthetic perceptions. Scattered among people of varied calibre and worldly position, we find those perceptions developed to an extent which makes the demon of Ugliness a ceaseless source of misery. Especially so when that demon enters man or woman and reveals itself in manner, movement, speech, laughter.

Plebeians might be called people possessed by the demon of Ugliness. They are stamped on face and form with that demon's seal. No disguise, however cunningly devised, can enable them to escape their social doom.

The Plebeian's walk is either unsteady, pompous, or plodding. His eye is feeble in outlook, sly in expression; his lips the harbinger of every shade of shrewdness and vulgarity. His manner is now absolutely repulsive, now a base counterfeit of good-breeding. His conversation reveals himself in every sentence, every syllable. If he refer to people he knows or hears of, it is always in connection with the street they live in, the clothes they wear, the money they make or spend. His estimate of them is purely external. He cares nothing for their thoughts, their sentiments, their attainments. He regards them sim-



ply as a means of gratifying his senses, of furthering his ambition, of augmenting his heap of gold.

Yet, seeing a certain social consideration attained by Gentlefolks, he deems it well occasionally to imitate them. This, of course, goes no further than the outer covering—the roof over his head, the garment he wears, the manner of speech. The motive which directs choice lacking, the imitation is obvious to every discerning eye. Honest worth, however plain, receives full measure of respect from the best judges of men; but pretence, in any form, creates an aversion almost justifiable, wholly ineradicable.

With what unfeigned amazement I often hear thanks expressed—thanks for favors received, but thanks wholly devoid of feeling and appreciation!

The other day Mrs. M. presented her maid Betty with a new article of dress, which was both useful and pretty. Of its kind, indeed, there was nothing better. Yet Betty, who works daily for a living, and certainly does not receive presents in superabundance, manifested neither surprise nor pleasure. She was as impassive as if a bit of cake or fruit had been handed her. She said, "Thank you"—but in what a cold, inanimate tone! Not a trace of recognition, either of the gift or of the kindness which prompted it!

Betty is not cited as an uncommon specimen of plebeian. Many holding much higher positions in social life strongly resemble her. Giving thanks is as much a matter of good-breeding as a mode of salutation, of conferring a favor, of accepting apology. I may have no need of the gift presented to me, may see in it no value, no beauty; but, if churlish enough

to let these facts outweigh the idea of the giver, I stamp myself as a plebeian. To analyze the motives which precede and produce the gift would be purely absurd. No one living in and knowing the world would pretend that every gift he gives expresses his respect or affection for the recipient.

Giving and receiving presents is simply one of our social customs. Like many others, it in no way holds us accountable for its specific worth. And who can doubt that it would be a senseless waste of comfort to try to abolish what certainly originated in good feeling, and which in many instances still continues its pleasing function!

To anticipate a friend's actual want or passing whim, and gratify it with as much taste as means and opportunity permit, is one of the keen pleasures of life no one would willingly forego. The veriest trifle is often invested with a color and weight which affect our entire being.

Apologizing! Is not this an acknowledged force in society? And can we over-estimate a thing which soothes the smart of physical agony? changes a flash of displeasure to a kindly smile? proves an antidote to the most venomous epithet? transforms a murderous purpose to an amicable extension of the hand? These and still more wonderful effects it can produce, but produce only when wielded by certain privileged people. A force becomes either beneficent or destructive in proportion to the guiding intellect or hand. So apologizing, if awkwardly done, never fails to make both offence and offender appear blacker than before. Who cannot recall instances when an apology took

the form of dire insult?—when but for the restraint of reason or charity it would have been promptly resented as such! Coming from a torpid mind or from a nature coarse-grained and ill-bred, an apology is merely the imitation of a good thing. It is an intention rudely intimated; a regret without feeling; a show of sensibility. It gives words without meaning, smiles that are facial contortions, gestures that simulate deprecation—all these with manifest reluctance, with unavoidable floundering.

To make an apology is neither an easy task nor an agreeable one. And the reason is obvious enough. Is it not an open acknowledgment of ill-conduct? Whoever has cause to apologize frequently, is either thoughtless, ill-bred, or weak-willed. The act publishes the fact. The more considerate of others, the more self-controlled we are, the less occasion for making public our selfishness or folly.

Yet neither the family nor society can exist without this custom. The most gentle of Gentlefolks has human foibles and passions. He is liable to utter words he regrets, to commit the act which reason disapproves, which feeling repudiates. And from the dilemmas entailed by want of self-control, Apology alone can extricate him. The fact that ill-bred people do not know how to receive an apology, often makes the humiliation we submit to still more effective. To feel that our courtesy is thrown away induces greater care in guarding speech, temper, manner.

Looking at society—not as the highest culture would fain have it, but at society as it is—we find that many customs puerile enough in themselves are yet indispensable for that mutual forbearance which

distinguishes gentlemen from savages. Quick minds cannot help forming opinions. Granted even that their deductions be correct: yet they are not on that score justified in thrusting them on minds of a lower grade or too undeveloped to understand. Nor are we ever justified in acting upon mere feeling or fancy or inclination when it affects others.

The simple act of walking down the street without a hat would subject a man to a mild mob treatment, without in the least adding to his force of character. So with the laugh in a malapropos moment, the harmless word or gesture in an unfitting place, the costume at variance with the occasion. The most insignificant sound, the barely perceptible sign, may create dislike, arouse hostile feeling. And, usually, the best people around us are the most easily ruffled by discourtesy, the most liable to be irritated by boorishness.

Laughter! Is it not curious to note the degrees of temperament, thought, and passion that it portrays? From its beaming and sparkling on the face of happy childhood to its grim sardonic aspect in unhappy maturity, are infinite varieties to interest the observer. Mirth, wit, joviality; mischief, malice, deviltry; the clear ringing sound of health and high spirits; the grating tones and appalling shrieks of maniacs—do not all tell their tale of human nature? We remember a laugh like a face or a voice, derive comfort or annoyance from the memory.

The frequent expression "It does me good to hear him laugh" has its counterbalance in the truth, perhaps oftener felt than spoken, "It frets me to hear him laugh."

I am often tempted to wish Plebeians could not laugh—it is so fatally expressive. The echoes of two or three kinds are now ringing in my ears.

People's looks are often far better than themselves ; as if Nature meant well, but human blundering had spoiled the thing. In many cases, then, if people could smile only—not laugh—the effect would be far less disagreeable. The illusion of liking them, albeit a purely external liking, might be kept up longer. But when a peal of laughter tells us in unmistakable tones precisely the nature of a man, what can we do? Nothing: we simply throw up our interest—sulk mentally—because the pleasing illusion is over. And the disenchantment is not of our own seeking. Are we not often surprised at the suddenness with which the nature of an entire stranger is made known? vexed even at its clashing with what eye or imagination had shown? Recalling a group of fellow-travellers, I see one of gentlemanly appearance and sensible countenance. The voice is harsh in tone, but the accent being foreign may account for this. One day I notice this man in conversation with others near, and hear him laugh. What! I exclaim mentally, can that gentle-looking man give vent to such a sound as that! A coarse-grained, unfeeling, cruel nature is revealed. After that, the utmost courtesy and keenest intelligence are overshadowed by that revelation. Mingled with it is regret, for we are to journey together several days. Another of that group is a man holding a position of eminence in the religious world. In conversation I notice certain remarks which seem strangely out of place from such a quarter, seem lacking in depth, earnestness, delicacy. Still, I refrain from passing

judgment. I may be in an unfair mood, hasty, uncharitable. Knowing the man's rank and influence, I would fain believe there is something more than is apparent. But now comes the test—the Laugh. It happens at table. The conversation is general, and presently this laugh is heard—a prolonged, shallow, brainless sound, too convincing to be disregarded. Whatever doubts before existed are now instantly dispelled. Hereafter, whatever that man may say about himself or his influence, his personality is indelibly stamped with unfitness for his post. What strange accident placed him there—one of responsibility and distinction—I cannot tell. But this much is clear from that Laugh—a total absence of intellect and a full measure of triviality. Yet, had he known the effect, known how widely it separated him from the companionship of Gentlefolks, pride alone would have enabled him to check the unseemly mirth.

One sentiment controls another sentiment, one passion overcomes another passion. Once *knowing* the things best worth living for, every man compels one part of his nature to become subordinate to the other parts. The *knowing the best* is the chief end of all education.

Aristocrat! Why is this word so often one of reproach? This, too, from people quite capable of appreciating politeness and suavity of manner.

Is it the word, merely, which has fallen into disrepute? Or is it something beneath which excites the sarcastic comment, the covert sneer, the open disrespect?

“Mrs. So and So is too aristocratic for me!” is an

expression by no means laudatory of the lady alluded to. Any sensitive woman, indeed, would shrink from the imputation of coldness and hauteur conveyed in the word "aristocratic" thus used. But most of us find, sooner or later, that the opinions of our neighbors, cultured or otherwise, are worth considering. A rude form of speech often encloses an idea full of golden grains.

Haughtiness often comes from want of imagination. Thus, a woman accustomed to refinement resents rude manners, habits, or language because she cannot imagine that others may be wholly unlike herself. She is not given to reflection, has seen nothing of the world beyond her own narrow circle. Quite natural, then, that she should measure people she meets by her own standard. If they come up to it, she is pleased; if they fall short, she is displeased. She does not, in reality, wish to hurt people's feelings; she simply dislikes *gaucherie* or vulgarity, and lacks the imaginative faculty which would enable her, quick as thought, to change places with the people who annoy her. Yet, if a woman *appear* haughty, whether to her equals or to others, she will do well to amend that appearance. The ambition of a true aristocrat is to let manner be the exponent of self. High-bred women all the world over are noted for their uniform graciousness of bearing. Nor is this a mere effect of easy fortune, good-temper, or other adventitious circumstance. High-bred women have very often keen wit, fine sensibilities, strong passions. And to keep these under control as their position requires, calls for no slight degree of character. In such women it is not only the faultless toilette, the fitting speech, the winning smile, the

graceful movement. Behind all this is a something which makes the effect vivifying. There must be a high-bred spirit within to present the genuine high-bred woman. Can we conceive of any better means for the sound culture of society—whether in a village or in a city—than the presence of women animated by such a spirit?

They exact obedience from subordinates, but so courteously that the exaction never chafes. They receive respect, not because of position or means, but because they are felt to be in themselves superior. They diffuse refinement from their personality, influence those even who know nothing of the thing itself or its origin. Not that they can transform the people about them, make gentle-men out of rough men, gentle-women out of rude women. But they check the unruly social elements which otherwise would gain the ascendant, counteract the coarseness which renders even crime itself so much more brutal in results.

Fashionable women! What a contrast do these not present to aristocrats of pure metal! Fashion often imitates—and cleverly, too—the semblance of gentle breeding. Yet this semblance is purely superficial: it evaporates instantaneously in presence of the original. A fashionable woman sometimes adorns, but rarely influences, never benefits, society. She excites an admiration compounded of half-coldness half-curiosity. We give credit for good appearance, well-timed, carefully-framed speech, general self-possession—give credit, while all the time conscious of a moral chill which defies every attempt at comfort.

Woman is a much more skilful imitator than man.



In addition to services rendered by dress, which enable her in a measure to conceal physical imperfections, she possesses countless indefinable methods of appearing what she is not. Not that she intends to dissemble, still less to deceive, to play false. It seems rather a consciousness of weakness, a trying to cover timidity with assurance, to keep out of sight natural feelings in obedience to stringent social laws. Many a woman of warm sensibilities grows into a cold, unattractive manner through the repression of herself made essential by her fears, her pride, her conventional modesty.

Fashion exerts a far less despotic sway over men than over women. First of all, their enforced activity is a means of protection. This activity is not a negative but a positive matter. If men do not act—act decidedly, vigorously—they fall. And nobody runs to pick them up, to soothe and sympathize with them. They fall, and must take the bruises, the hooting, the shame.

Next, their physical and mental constitution. They have more strength, hence greater undertakings, greater freedom, broader views of life. Under average conditions we seldom find men anxious about their social status. While ready to admit what is better than they themselves possess, they are not tormented by that restless spirit of emulation which too often destroys woman's peace. Men seem almost naturally to take a rational view of society, to accept their given place in it. They have excitement, risk, and danger enough, disappointment and humiliation enough. But all these are in broader, deeper channels, so that a half-century of average toil appears to

have a less warping effect upon men than upon women.

This in a general view. In a special one, instances are not wanting to prove that fashionable men are, in vapid aims and senseless deeds, fully up to the level of fashionable women. And for many obvious reasons their imitations and deceptions receive far less mercy at the hands of aristocrats. Infinite degrees of weakness and frivolity are excused in women which in men appear utterly inexcusable. Ornament of dress, for instance, may give a plebeian woman at least a pleasing appearance. Until she moves, or speaks, she seems of a higher grade than she is. But no device of costume can throw this glamour over masculine shoulders. Indeed, it often has a directly contrary effect, enhancing the very uncouthness it is meant to hide.

Talking! When to do it, how to do it, when not to do it? To learn this, I would consult, not books, not scholars, not fashion, but social aristocrats. They alone know how to divest the art of its dry mechanism, make it an ingenious device for the barter of wit, of sentiment, of experiences. Yet under all the graces of language lies a force which plans, elaborates, develops, and inspires all other minds within its sphere to lend their aid in the same cause. They never prose, preach, dogmatize, rail, or monopolize; never expound opinions or feelings before a miscellaneous audience. They do not evince indiscriminate confidingness. Save when it is the right of spiritual guidance or friendship, struggles of the soul are not laid bare to other eyes. What they hope, what they

fear, what they endure—these are scrupulously walled in, hidden from idle passers-by. They do not proclaim their weaknesses, faults, or propensities, make the world their confessor.

Argument—above all—they regard as a firebrand in social converse; deem it the sure precursor of angry frowns, bitter words, unjust accusations. With a quick mind and a fiery heart, so much greater the danger. What jangles more harshly upon sensitive ears than two human voices vehemently—but vainly—insisting upon some trivial fact or pet theory being accepted?

Arguing is a contest of temperaments and brains. While it lasts, the parties are natural enemies. Each tries to circumvent or vanquish the other. Eye, gesture, words, accent, all testify to the inimical elements stirred to activity. Yet, for clever, keen-witted people, it is no easy matter to eschew argument. Provocation comes with each new topic of discussion. The trap is always open for unwary feet, and recollection of its sharp grip seems no safeguard against a second seizure. What neither reason nor feeling can prevent, good-breeding effects. It banishes argument from society, restricts it to the tête-à-tête encounter between mental peers. Talking, however, is not to be abjured because arguing is disagreeable.

Silence may or may not be a virtue. Like most other things, it is only relatively good or bad. Silence between friends is no more irksome than solitude. Mutual confidence, a thorough understanding of thought and sentiment, makes talking a matter not of time or place, but of spontaneity. But harmony does not come without preparation. As friendship

means more than merely knowing people superficially, so the silence pertaining to friendship is preceded by free interchange of thought. Silence between enemies gives eloquent testimony to its power of creating discomfort.

Whether the feud be of a day or of years, one of its most effective weapons is the sullen silence which refuses either explanation or questioning, courtesy or reproach.

Silence arises, too, from physical or psychological causes. Ignorance upon these points leaves the victim wholly without means of defending himself from thoughtless prying. With self-knowledge come the invaluable weapons called gossip, chit-chat, repartee. Silence does not always mean inability to talk. It may be the mood of an hour, the result of a cloud upon brain or heart, the sign of susceptibility rudely handled.

There are people constitutionally silent. For them it is as tiresome to talk as for others to restrain their tongues. Yet such a natural bias no more justifies taciturnity than love of money justifies miserliness. Culture is a sure means of modifying every defect. It develops in one direction, restrains in another, brings the whole under control.

Silence when civility demands speech, is as unpardonable a violation of social comfort as the pouring forth of private grievances into the ears of casual acquaintance. Silence upon festive occasions is also as incongruous as loquaciousness upon solemn ones. Talking and non-talking are at fitting times equally agreeable, equally effective. To learn the art of applying them we may resort to every assistance society

gives, and add to them whatever stock of reason and finesse Nature has granted us.

Have we not each of us our own special outlook upon life, our own deductions, sensations, history? And in sharing these with others, is there not as much generosity as in sharing our tangible goods?

Good Listening! Perhaps it would be difficult to define a passive virtue if we were not from time to time jarred upon by active viciousness. So with Listening. Without the varieties social intercourse subjects us to, we could hardly appreciate the delicate pleasure arising from a good kind. I once knew a young woman living amid many of the elegancies of life, with access to the average social life of a large city. She had had every advantage of education, of travel, of easy circumstances, and in personal appearance could have no grudge against Nature. Yet she was not attractive; she did not know the art of listening. She talked well enough, but when her turn came to listen she instantly lost her footing. Her eyes wandered, seemed to scan the dress, the features, the antecedents, the present, and the probable future of her companion.

She examined—she did not listen—a proceeding as out of place as discomfiting. Could the best talker talk when under fire of a critical pair of eyes? Impossible! He would either have a sudden attack of muteness, or in sheer desperation utter weak commonplaces until means of escape offered.

A Good Listener looks—looks without staring—at the speaker. He gives a civil hearing, even if the thing spoken be not pleasing or interesting to himself.

He does not look round the room, at the walls, beyond the speaker into vacancy. He does not excite courtesy to rebellion by a distraction which a well-bred child blushes for, but which full-grown plebeians daily practise without a tinge of compunction. His listening expresses respect for the speaker, deference for his personality, attention to his statements. This much is honestly given, irrespective of liking or not liking the speaker: it is simply an outgrowth of good manners due to himself.

Good Listening starts our best vein of talking, gives a fluency which is a pleasing surprise to ourselves. We are well aware of possessing no great facility of expression, no varied experiences, no brilliancy of ideas, no sparkling wit. Yet under that stimulus we find our tongues readily giving forth the best of which we are capable. This done, we are self-complacent, comfortable; and with reason. Wishing to appear "our best," do "our best," be "our best," is quite as praiseworthy for grown-up folks as for children.

Mr. A. is a friend of many years' standing, and our mutual regard is one of those pleasing certainties which require no asseveration. Yet I rarely pass an hour in his society without being painfully pricked by the briers of a cold phlegmatic manner. Put into words, it would sound something like this:

I wish the fellow were more demonstrative! He is very good, and I like him; but he nevertheless vexes me greatly. And why? Because he lets me talk and talk, suggest and suggest—the more of it the better.

Not that I begrudge my words: such as they are, they are willingly given. But I do like to see some sign of recognition, some indication of being heard.

But here there is so little variation in countenance or manner that I wax impatient spite of myself. Vitality of interest seems wasted. For Heaven's sake! I ejaculate mentally, do evince some signs of hearing, something to revive my waning energy, something to prevent that mental yawning so fatal to conversation! Give me vigorous opposition, fault-finding, ridicule—anything, rather than languid acquiescence or heavy indifference!

Now, I am not so unreasonable as to expect Mr. A. to change at will—or to please me—a nature essentially averse to demonstration. But I do feel that consideration for others might enable him to qualify that constitutional inertia by at least a frank avowal of it and by an endeavor to acquire greater courtesy of listening.

People do many things for practice. An actor acts, a reader reads, a singer sings, an orator declaims, for it: aspirants for excellence, they put forth their utmost skill not merely before a poor audience, but often before no audience at all. Why not then let talking and listening be done for study? To a few favored people it is natural to do both well; but to the majority it is as unnatural as to dance with ease and grace without practice.

What affectation! cry sundry good honest voices. What affectation to make talking and listening an art!

Perhaps it is. But no more so than most of the things civilized society demands. Art, science, good-breeding—indeed, the very rudiments of these—must be taught. Whatever we do well must once have been acquired by ourselves or by our progenitors—must once have been a species of affectation. The

great point is to affect things worthy of acquisition—noble arts, useful sciences, gentle manners; to learn as early in life as possible the distinctions between them and the contemptible imitations of them so thoughtlessly accepted by the uneducated. Affectation of intelligence without respect for intelligence itself; affectation of politeness without appreciation of kind feeling as the source of politeness; affectation of eloquence without knowing the exquisite delights arising from the human voice animated by a soul—these very justly bring down upon us the sting of ridicule, the lash of satire.

Aristocrats! Surely there can be no more egregious error than to imagine the graces and refinements of life exclusively held by that class! No man, no woman who knows the world could fall into so great a fallacy! Social history records the agreeable fact that whenever individuals are fitted by their personality for intercourse with “best people” they are cordially welcomed into the charmed circle. Indeed, the class called Aristocracy—in which from its name and antecedents the best people *ought* to be found—is apt to degenerate. Loop-holes occur here and there, loop-holes through which trains of vice and vulgarity are admitted. Families whose escutcheon was once spotless see it blackened with the unworthiness of a member grown coarse, hard, cruel. Nobility receives an outrage which the commonalty must avenge. And this avenger often comes in the form of a plebeian, one born amid every worldly disadvantage, yet through character clothed with every attribute that commands our respect. He demonstrates the power of intellect



directed to culture, the possibility of gaining through steadfast energy the place of social consideration which to other men comes by right of birth. A self-made aristocrat is no more uncommon than a self-made scholar. In both cases character is the basis of the result.

The Aristocrat of social life needs no pedigree; he is everywhere welcomed for what he is. One of his most striking attributes is self-control. He is possibly very different from others in thought, in feeling, in mode of life; but he does not make that difference ostentatiously public. He avoids even a semblance of oddity, of interference with or clashing with others. When in the world, he is in uniform and on duty. Only in private life does he permit the lounging attitude, the frank expression of opinion, the natural demonstration of feeling. Just as the greatest degree of social independence is attainable in a vast city, where people, for the most part, are too busy to inquire into their neighbors' affairs, so aristocrats gain the greatest amount of individuality by conforming to social customs.

The Plebeian of society is nothing without his pedigree, his rent-roll, or his genius. He may repulse thorough-bred people by his uncouth bearing, his slovenly attire, his brusque or bearish manners. Yet, recognizing the power the Plebeian accidentally represents, they stifle their repulsion, force themselves into gentleness and tolerance.

And such conduct is not dissimulation, not hypocrisy: it is one of the conditions which hold society together. Without it, there would be instant social anarchy, speedy dissolution of all the refinements now

so justly prized. Yet, while admitting this, who among aristocrats would not fervently cry:

If my companion have but one special quality, let it, in the name of comfort, be good-breeding! With that, privation of the bitterest kind may be patiently endured, calamity itself be shorn of its cruel fangs. Without that, the most luxurious appurtenances yield no satisfaction, the brilliancy of genius only a sop to pride, a tribute to vanity.

Every country has its social aristocrats, with national traits strongly marked. And for very natural reasons, all men are disposed to regard with partiality those of their own country. I, for one, share this human prejudice. Granting willingly that people of good-breeding everywhere are on a social plane, I still prefer those of my own nationality. Doubtless the inhabitant of Europe, of Asia, or of Africa feels precisely the same preference. And is not the reason patent enough?

To be thoroughly comfortable in society we must needs have a thorough knowledge of its customs, its modes of thinking and doing. And not the knowledge only, but the habit of doing the right thing without a shade of deliberation. Without this, we are ill at ease, because not sure of playing our part well. In our own country, such knowledge and habit are easier to acquire than in a foreign one.

Well-bred children become aristocrats without knowing how. They are mercifully spared the rebukes and humiliations which ill-bred children must pass through before becoming fit for good society. Even in a country where the language is the same

and the customs similar, social life presents an infinite variety of differences. To be ignorant of these, or to know them only by hearsay, prevents us from being entirely complacent. The expression "feeling at home" in a country, in a community, in a dwelling, means more than most of us are willing to admit.

To be "at home" with people of intelligence and refinement implies very clearly that we ourselves must possess, if not those attributes, at least their germs. If we do not, we must of necessity feel ill at ease with them, and, if reasonable, be content to admire without envy.

Aristocrats do not preserve the honors and privileges of their class without sagacity, without fortitude, without sacrifices.

In every country—whatsoever the government—they are instinctively hated by plebeians. Incompetent to grasp the truth underlying the name, these give a contemptuous shrug and upon the slightest provocation—real or fancied—mutter :

"Down with Aristocrats!"

Ignorance begets vulgarity, prejudice, persecution.

Yet, battling with these enemies as they do, from beginning to end, aristocrats are wholly free from personal animosity. They fight against principles, not against men. If in the fray false opinions be formed, unhappy feelings engendered, innocent people made to suffer, these disastrous results are not to be laid at their door, but at the doors of sottishness and passion. Elevated by the adventitious fact of inheritance, as aristocrats usually are, I do not give admiration on that score. But, if they realize the trust embodied in their inheritance, live in accord with its benefits, pro-

mulgate the gentleness and refinement they believe in —*then* I yield unqualified homage. This because they do the best of which human nature is capable. They make no professions of superiority, insist upon no dogmas, rail against no class, ignore no facts. They do not expect good out of bad, thus making ideality a means of torture, but they idealize by force of delicate sentiment the many painful realities about us.

## II.

### LOVERS OF NATURE.

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LOVERS of Nature! I have heard of them all my life without understanding, exactly, who and what they are. Still, like many other things not perfectly clear, the term awakens curiosity, sets me to thinking. The two words—*Lover*, *Nature*—taken separately, seem simple enough. *Lover*, for instance, is one who is drawn to a particular object regardless of its intrinsic value, or of any personal benefit to be derived—whether to a woman, a child, a horse; to science, art, mechanism; to a piece of porcelain, furniture, or coin.

Nature! This, too, signifies a variety of facts or effects, from the drop of rain or snow-flake, to the most heroic act or most devilish crime.

Nature is often very beautiful, but just as often very ugly. She is alternately kind, harsh, calm, tempestuous, attractive, repellant. Nature is everywhere, means anything and all things, embraces every object within and beyond reach.

Metaphysics are just as much Nature as the physical sciences are. A man who can analyze the human mind and thread the labyrinths of the soul is on the same plane with the man who masters anatomy and

pathology: both are students of Nature, both to be respected in proportion to character.

Gazing at a mountain in the distance, or climbing over its rugged sides—these are but different expressions of the same sentiment. The botanist loves Nature in one way; the geologist in another; the artist takes his share in a mode inexplicable to both; the poet—in one mood clinging to earth, in another soaring to heaven—pours forth a strain so tender, so passionate, that all mankind listens with bated breath.

Yet before Nature can be loved at all there must be a capacity for loving. This implies mind to see and distinguish, heart to vibrate, strength to hold, devotion to cherish. A narrow mind cannot take broad views. A utilitarian has no day-dreams. A mechanician sees no beauty in the swift-flowing stream, no grandeur in the headlong cataract. A city belle regards the country as a place for mud or dust, for farmers, for cattle, for ennui.

Simple-minded, illiterate people, bred in regions of natural beauty, stare open-mouthed at travellers coming great distances solely to behold the mountain, valley, or sea-coast which they all their lives have seen—without seeing. What to them is the sunrise? the sunset? How do they define landscape, or forest, glade, and grotto? Their definition is somewhat in this form: Nature means a place to live in; something to eat; clothing for the body; permission to do for ever what we were born and bred to do.

Some people, who have known me many years, smile ironically, if I incidentally let fall words hinting at personal regard for Nature, and exclaim, "What! you care for Nature! you who even in the country

stay indoors often the whole day!" I bend low under the imputation, unable indeed to make any cogent defence. And still—in a vague, undefined way—I have after all a sort of understanding with Nature.

If the perfume of a flower in a neighboring garden be wafted through my open window, my senses take in the sweet pleasure as heartily as if the flower were my own. If a bird flit across my vision, it receives from me a warm mental greeting; if a passing cloud drop its message of beauty, it steels my ear to mundane sounds. If, on the street, the breeze come with bracing freshness, it spurs me on to quicker step, to higher hope, to stronger endurance; if it come with balmy languor, it carries me to southern climes, with all their wealth of cloudless sky, luxuriant flora, restful idleness. Let a man of noble intellect come within my range, I grant him instant respect, cordial interest; let a beautiful woman stir me to homage, I recognize the divine principle she embodies; if a child thrill me with tenderness, or move me to self-sacrifice, I hear Nature speaking through the innocent eyes and pleading voice. If I do not ramble off to distant scenes of beauty, it is only because of the abundance here within immediate reach; often indeed this arouses more thought and feeling than can be conveniently entertained. Not that I am always in the mood for appreciating Nature. When hard pressed by worldly cares, when forced into association with alien minds, I pass unnoticed those objects which in other moments cause pleasing emotions.

Intimacy with Nature implies favorite seasons, special hours, chosen haunts for converse.

Spring days! How they make me long for the

country!—for the country anywhere away from fashionable suburbs, from highways, from parks, from trimmed trees, from conventional flower-beds! away from railroads, from hotels, from business, from domestic routine! away from the sight of sin and suffering which cannot be helped! away from the weary forms and anxious faces daily passing and repassing!

In the country each day offers its special festival. A radiant morning after nocturnal showers—what sources of pleasure it opens! Yesterday the earth was parched, panting, exhausted. To-day it is cool, fresh, rejuvenated. The air invigorates while it soothes; every breath inhaled sends a new current of life through the veins, empowering sense and spirit to act with tenfold force: suddenly all the earth is clothed with prismatic hues. It is an effect much resembling convalescence—that more complacent state than positive health, owing to a consciousness of renewed vigor with exemption from ordinary responsibilities. The body, relieved of the disturbing cause, in a purer condition than during previous weeks or months, experiences a delicious sense of regeneration. Still gratitude—that peculiar phase of mind which always succeeds great anxiety, suspense, or physical pain—diffuses itself over the system and renders it susceptible to external life.

Tender leaves and delicate blossoms are full of a new-born beauty. Happy songsters send forth their notes of rapture, and awaken a desire to know their form, name, and household ways. Joy seems their social element: whether in secluded nests or winging their way through space, they suggest lightness of



heart. Gazing at those marvellous evolutions which utterly baffle human mechanism, can I help regretting the loss of that child-faith which gave us wings in the next world?

Angels' wings! Can any natural religion, any scientific facts, any philosophic deductions, wholly divest the imagination of so blissful an anticipation?

Wishing full blessing out of spring days, I say to those near:

Leave me, good friends. You are very dear to me now and always, but, before opening this book of mysteries, I must be in solitude. Your presence moves, claims, interests me, shivers Thought into countless irredeemable fragments. Even if congenial, as many of you are, is it likely that you should be attuned to Nature just when I am?

No! To read her language aright, we must be alone; all our faculties must be strained to the utmost, centred upon herself. If, haply, we bring to her altar more feeling than reason, more reverence than science, we need not therefore be abashed. Knowing many things is by no means synonymous with enjoying many things.

A man may be profoundly versed in scientific lore while icy cold to Nature's charms; may scan the heavens or fathom the ocean without deriving from either a single hour of delight. The physical sciences hold out promises richly laden with knowledge and satisfaction. Let the student delve into secrets of air, water, earth, firmament; let him pass days and nights of searching inquiry into those ever-new, ever-diversified, ever-solemn realities: but only under conditions let him do this. If, perchance, he feel more

at home in mental or moral regions; if these overbalance the other, surely there could be no scruple as to awarding the preference. Limits to human acquisition and advancement are thrust upon us so frequently, so urgently, that finally we see ourselves forced to abandon numerous projects which once seemed within easy range of an average lifetime.

Solitude anywhere—but especially in the country—is a reliable test of individuality. If a child bring me armfuls of stones, of plants, of birds, of insects, I see in it indications of a future naturalist. Does he, on the contrary, wander dreamily along the river or through the forest, noting everything, handling nothing, I read the symptoms of a poetic or philosophic nature.

If we can lose ourselves in revery at any chance moment of leisure; if we prefer contemplation to activity; if we are more quickly touched by sentiment than by the glitter of gold; if under all the conditions of our lot we value soul more than sense, we need not fear the effect of Solitude. Who of this temperament does not know the mute ecstasy of plunging unrestrainedly into meditation! of having a perfect reconciliation with the inner forces of his own nature!

Whoever would appreciate home must travel—not once only, but often, unwillingly, in all sorts of company, to all manner of places.

Home, after that, seems a very paradise of repose, of privacy: petty domestic annoyances have lost their power to irritate. We are conscious of nothing save sensations of calm content. In the first flush of arriving home we fondly deem that never again can

a murmur of discontent pass our lips, a frown of vexation disfigure our brow. Revived in soul, we would gladly let the body remain indefinitely torpid.

So, whoever would know the perfect flavor of spring days—of their power to invigorate and inspire—must be prepared for them by previous months of labor, distraction, and turmoil in town. Solitude then is supreme content.

“Very unsocial!” cry some. It sounds so, I admit; but let me ask:

Can any one change his temperament? If not, can he be censured for giving his nature the nourishment it craves? If one man is prostrated by what another finds strengthening, can he do aught to change a fact for which Nature, not he, is accountable?

Why, then, trouble himself about it? Let him rather take all the soul-supplies that come within lawful reach; be seriously self-vexed only when he carelessly deviates from the course which insures protection from the uniformity pressing from all quarters.

Are those with whom we live the happier for our presence, for our sacrifices, or not? Does our thinking appeal to, does our feeling correspond with, their own, or not?

Upon the honest answer to these questions depends the solitude we may or may not justly appropriate. Liking a thing is, of course, no justification for taking it if the act mar another's comfort or increase his burden: otherwise, “Liking” is an excellent reason for taking.

People wholly dissimilar may yet live under the same roof peaceably enough. Take John and myself

—could there be a more striking contrast? He so regular, so methodical, in his daily actions, never swerving an inch from the well-trodden path; and I so irregular, so spasmodic, never thinking, never feeling—even if doing—the same, from day to day, hardly, indeed, from hour to hour. Nevertheless, we live upon the whole very tranquilly, for neither interferes with the other. Some of our thoughts bear an odd sort of resemblance. It almost seems as if Nature had at first intended us to be alike, but afterwards changed her mind: too late to take out certain traits, her only resource was to bring circumstances to bear upon them and produce different results. In him, for instance, imagination was repressed; in me education favored its development; but when moral or philosophical questions come up there is usually a similarity of opinion. The one irreconcilable difference is Imagination—its total absence in him, its continual presence in me. Here we often clash, and I see clearly that such collisions are as natural as unavoidable. How, indeed, can strictly prosaic views and eminently imaginative ones agree? With him all must be utilitarian, or it is naught. With me all must be tinged with ideality, or it is naught. Psychologically, then, we are and must ever remain asunder, while in daily life there need be neither discord nor dispute.

To one thus practical, life means an endless unvarying routine; the more closely that principle be followed, the better is he satisfied with himself. To the other—the imaginative one—life means a perpetual variety, a succession of changes, all so fraught with wonder and beauty that it appears treason to spend much time gazing at one special scene. Considering

the things that attract, interest, and fascinate, an average lifetime is far too brief for appreciation of life's gifts.

John and I together in the country, then—do you think we look at the same things? experience the same sensations? By no means. Nothing, indeed, could be farther apart. Yet we go there occasionally in company, and amuse ourselves very well—each his own way. John inspects the crops, looks after the stock, calculates the quantity of vendible matter in garden, field, and orchard. He talks with the farmers and laborers; he knows all about the soil, the drainage, the springs. He is interested in the planting and cultivation of things, can answer any question or make valuable suggestions about them. He tells the men what to do, how to do, when to do; he is looked upon with respect, consulted by everybody, is lord of the ground by right of knowledge.

While I—well, I do none of those things.

Summer brings me a fuller, deeper enjoyment than Spring. Nature is then more developed, more rich in color, more intense in warmth, more competent to minister to body and mind. What repose symbolized in the woods and rocks! Always changing, yet always at heart calm, passionless! What sparkle and coolness in the running brooks! What more to wish for than permission to breathe the soft air, see these green fields, inhale this fragrance! Every day presents new aspects, varied combinations of atmosphere, light and shadow.

Sun, moon, stars, calm, hurricane, flood, electricity—all produce different states of mind and currents of feeling. At this season, more than at any other, I seem

to understand Nature—at least her special message to myself. When disinclined to commune with her, I know the reason; am not troubled by doubt as to waning affection. To know the felicity of summer days, let me have small ownership in the land that yields so many pleasures. Wondrous foliage, emerald lawns, carolling of birds—these give of their essence only to the mortal exempt from possession. Landholders often live amid scenes of transcendent loveliness with no more conception of it than the cattle grazing in the field. Even people of poetic minds lose appreciation of country in proportion to their material interests there. Nature is coy and reticent with care-laden people whose position requires them to manage, to explain, to watch over, to provide for, to criticise. With minds preoccupied with responsibility we lose the faculty of enjoying. Thought and feeling are left to gather up what morsels they may in odd and weary moments. Who can dwell upon beauty or grandeur when energy has been drained by public interests or domestic paraphernalia? Who could pursue scientific investigation in hours liable to incessant interruption? meditate upon abstract truth when beset by jarring material claims?

Summer months spent in taking care of things—things non-essential to comfort—is not this a satire upon Love of Nature? Yet this is not an uncommon mode of passing the summer.

A country-seat is, in theory, a haven of rest surrounded with beauty. In reality, it means a multitude of wants, a succession of business transactions, an endless round of anxieties. The farm, the garden,

the lawn, the orchard, the roads, the stables, the green-houses, the graperies ; the gardener, the gardener's assistants, the haymakers, the mechanics—these fall to the superintendence of the head of the family. While the dwelling, with its countless ramifications of servants, children, guests, actual needs, and imaginary duties, the daily visiting or receiving visits—these fall to the luckless woman who chances to be copartner in a country-seat. If, through a subordinate position in the family—say son, daughter, brother, or sister—we are personally absolved from direct accountability, we nevertheless share the burden through sympathy. Seeing, hearing, and comprehending an annoyance is almost as harassing as the thing itself. The intellect is not made of lead, nor the heart of stone ; so that even when there is a lull in the domestic turbulence the attempt to enjoy becomes futile. We recall what has just taken place, anticipate what at any instant may be repeated: our entire being is agitated in unison with the general unrest.

What a paradise! we cry, were it not for this incessant coming, going, and doing, which seem inevitable in a numerous household ! Now and then comes an hour of repose, which tells us what life might be in a place like this were it not for the harrowing activity engendered by material needs. Perchance it is a fragment of an hour that comes to us ; we seek the farthest corner from domestic sounds, where nothing meets the ear, save the gentle twittering of a bird or half-audible buzz of an insect. How we wish the fragment enlarged to a piece ! What delight in the bare thought of such moments prolonged to hours !

Why, indeed, should a Lover of Nature have fancy

gardens, fountains, statues, any imitations of town luxury? Surely he has enough to admire without consuming time and means in making miserable copies of her charms! That he may the more enjoy these, he selects the plainest of houses, and grounds too limited to be counted by acres. If choice of situation be possible, taste and judgment are permitted full range. To have lovely bits of landscape from every door and window is to have the full enjoyment of that which the noblest works of art can do no more than suggest.

Twilight in midsummer! Does it not suggest coolness, dreaminess, repose? The heat throughout the long, garish day has been oppressive, a full breath impossible. If in town, you "seem to walk through valleys of burning bricks." If in the country, you wonder why people must wear clothes, why cook, why sweep, why sew: why dig, plant, harrow, weed, or make hay. Why do any of these things, when to do them requires a supreme effort of will, a sacrifice of the last-remaining drops of vitality? But, with twilight comes a vivifying breeze to waft away inertia, to refresh languid senses, to brace drooping spirits.

Sitting under a favorite tree, you have leisure for the luxury of indolence; you take it without so much as a murmur of protest. Delicious verdure all around and above! Looking up, you see a labyrinthine bower which the birds know how to enjoy, if glad tones and brisk movements mean anything. Sitting here, thoughts come that come at no other hour. What if they are vague, desultory, flitting backwards and forwards without definable object! Enough that



they fill you with peace, lift you temporarily above the strife and confusion of worldliness, make you forget its vexing contrarieties which so clash with tranquillity! You lose yourself in the semi-voluptuous sensations induced by waning light, balmy atmosphere, relaxed thinking. To-Day is over. To-Morrow is too far off, too uncertain, to claim fixed purpose.

Perchance the day just gone has been one of continuous physical activity, leaving a fatigue which mars the loveliest scene and produces shades of despondency. Where are the brilliant aspirations that saluted you upon awaking that very morning? Where the ideas and fancies that flitted through the brain? They are gone! Could it be otherwise with a faculty so impressionable, so subtle as Thought, subjected to ceaseless busy affairs?

Twilight is a fitting hour for the idealist. Easy then to plan work, to moralize over past failure, to theorize success, to imagine fruition of hope, to heed the keen conviction of his unfitness for practical affairs! Airy shapes come trooping through the mind in fantastic array: how they mock and gibe as they note the outstretched hand, hear the entreating tones of a recreant idealist—one who has been vainly trying to live a realistic life!

A favorite tree grows into the affections. Lounging under its spreading branches, gazing abstractedly into chaos, you know moments of conscious happiness. Not a being within sight—not a sound save the chirping of birds, the humming of insects, the rustling of leaves. You know it cannot last long, this twilight solitude; busy human rights thrust their petitions

into the very heart of repose. But while it lasts let your lips revel in the nectar presented to them. Not as easy as it seems. Youth is too eager to get the full sweetness out of life: it plucks the fruit before it is ripe, disdains the present, while passionately longing for a future that never comes—never comes in the wished-for guise. Maturity profits by what has gone before; it holds the balance of Anticipation and Reality, which enables you to say: This—this Present now in my hands is the full-flavored wine of existence.

Sweet twilight-hour, shared by Nature and yourself—is that what men call solitude? Surely Nature is the rarest of companions! Who else can so enter the heart of hearts? who listen so well to the confidences no human ear may hear? And whatever heresy be spoken, there is never a ruffle or a frown, neither wonder nor displeasure, never impatience, never scorn. Patient, tender—even when her child is most wayward—she takes you in her arms and whispers the kindest consolations. In such moments the realization of life—life of sense, of thought, of feeling—is so keen that you half fear the end must be near. Can there be anything *more* than is now felt within?

Summer nights in the country! Every one has his own remembrance or conception of what they bring.

Lovers of Nature extract from a single one more poetic beauty, more pure joy, than others obtain in three months of nights. Have you, reader, ever tasted of that beauty, felt thrills of that joy? Have you stood with uncovered soul before the majestic heavens, awed by their serenity, their fitfulness, their

storm? Did they drive you within yourself as no other force could, drawing forth the avowal: I know nothing—I only feel, believe, hope everything!

Immeasurable Space! unattainable Height! inconceivable Distance! How comes it that I am not overwhelmed by the magnitude of Nature? Surely it is Reason alone that saves me!

Is it cowardice to be afraid of thunder-storms? If so, then I confess myself a coward. There are times when electricity in the air so oppresses me that everything save feeling is suspended. Talking, reading, sewing, idling—all become alike impossible. I wander about like one in somnambulism. Reason, pride, and self-respect are called upon: they help to preserve a semblance of calmness, but do not prevent an inner perturbation. Happily, constitutional fear, while never outgrown, may be gradually counteracted by reason. To experience terror without this controlling element is to be an abject slave cowering before a merciless master. To experience terror with mental ability to discern its cause, is to be a slave who faces and knows himself superior to his master.

Are there not people wholly devoid of fear? who have no dread of accidents in travelling? no anticipation of fire or burglars at home? who have no shrinking from the darkness? never dream weird dreams? have no horror of apparitions? no belief in anything they cannot see or touch? There are such people; and they possess something for which Nature is to be thanked. But fearless people often omit this tribute: they claim the honor as if it resulted from their own superior force of character. As children, they show contempt for their timid companions: as adults, they

entertain precisely the same sentiment hidden under polite phrases or a patronizing manner.

Yet a timid person often extracts a strange, wild transport from the very centre of fear. A thunder-storm may then bring its inspiration to one physically unstrung by the warring elements.

I recall one once witnessed in the country. It is late at night. Gazing from an upper window towards the west, everything above and below is of densest blackness. Gradually the eye grows accustomed to the blackness, and in the midst of it distinguishes the special cloud that is to discharge the celestial salvo. Directly above the horizon it lowers, and how full of wrath its visage! As I gaze—half astonished at my own temerity—behold the first flash, a blaze of heavenly fire which well-nigh blinds me! Intensity of light followed by instantaneous eclipse! In a few seconds comes the thunder resounding from cloud to cloud in angry tones. To lose nothing, I lean forward from the open window, listening intently as they die away. Again utter blackness, supreme silence—again a display of fiery splendor, such as may hardly be twice beheld in a lifetime! It is as if the firmament were violently rent asunder to show forth the power of the Unseen. Enthusiasm of soul is now at its highest pitch—fear is merged in adoration.

Five times the transcendent spectacle is repeated, producing mingled admiration and terror never to be forgotten. Finally the storm-cloud approaches our own domicile. A forked flash simultaneous with a crashing peal drives me shrinking from my window-observatory—I feel in the presence of danger, scarcely dare draw a breath! Yet, for having seen, for having

felt, for having appreciated, I am deeply grateful. I move about softly, reverently, as if a new and rare experience had been added to life.

Who is a true Lover of Nature? Is it not the best-endowed man living the least artificial life? one who sees Nature not only in physical science or in poetic visions, but likewise in humanity? Such a man is not only a lover, but a favored lover. He holds the magic which penetrates Nature's reserve, draws forth her sweetness, subdues her moods, makes her very waywardness conduce to his delight. He alone ventures into her arcana without being overawed by them. While pleasingly bewildered by complexity, he knows the folly of attempting to unravel. At one moment radiant in sunbeams, at another frowning in storm, at still another tranquil in repose, she produces sensations which indelibly stamp her individuality. To reproduce those sensations at will would be as impossible as to describe passions we are no longer capable of feeling. His love is with him at all times; wherever he goes, whatever he sees, whatever he does, that inspiration fills his being. Other men marvel at his buoyancy, at his content; he knows, but cannot explain, its source.

He craves the country, the ocean, the mountains, but desires gratification only under conditions. If summer holidays are to be passed amid a heterogeneous crowd of hotel "guests," where clatter and show take the place of tranquillity and simplicity, he prefers greatly to pass those days at home, even if it be in town. Better, far better, a single week of absolute enjoyment in one of Nature's haunts than months

of factitious repose amid incongruous activities! But he is not always privileged so to choose: he has family ties, must go with and for others, must give up his individual likings, adapt himself to ordinances of Fate: yet, doing this, he is none the less a true Lover.

Lovers of Nature living in town. Is this a paradox? No more so than a lover of luxury living in penury; a lover of refinement in contact with vulgarity; a lover of intellect associating with ignorance; a lover of beauty mated with ugliness,—and surely all these are often enough seen.

Many things, good and bad, are said of a large town. Like noted men and women, it has not only two reputations—one public, the other private—but its own individuality, which none save intimates know anything about. Half the world's knowledge is "Hearsay," nothing more. If a man have never lived in a large town, he knows nothing definite, nothing reliable, as to its effect upon himself. "Hearsay" gives much as to general features, but the gist of personality can come solely from actual contact.

To cursory observation, what is more prosaic than a vast, busy, prosperous town? Its commerce, dwellings, public buildings, markets, schools, shops—these present so great a sameness that we are prompted to exclaim:

Could any Lover of Nature pitch his tent there?

But here, as elsewhere, "cursory observation" sees only the surface of things; going deeper, it is found that the most ardent Lovers of Nature are town-bred people. Town gives the teacher, the book, the scien-

tific apparatus—without these who could fully appreciate Nature? Town is the seat of learning, wealth, ambition, philanthropy, social intercourse—all these find greater scope there than in the country. Country is the place for digesting the mental stores procured in town. No scholar when young and vigorous would dream of living in the country: no scholar when declining in physical strength would by preference live in town. Youth seeks excitement, variety: Age seeks tranquillity, sameness. What the first calls stagnation; the second calls rest.

Just as people make romance,—not places, costumes, or events,—so well-rounded characters—men and women with knowledge drilled into and made a part of themselves—make the best appreciators of Nature. In town, Humanity, with its brilliant lights and dark shadows, is spread before the mind; each individual fills a place, serves a purpose. If on one side are ignorance, vice, suffering; on the other side are enlightenment, virtue, happiness. Seeing both sides produces not only twofold sympathy, but sets forth the possibilities for development existing in both.

Living in town stimulates the imaginative faculty, giving a facility of invention which indemnifies for the absence of real objects. Having once beheld green fields, solemn forests, mountain, valley, lake—makes them a possession for all time, one capable of yielding its delights amid the very heart of material occupations. They form a series of pictures in the mind, each one holding its own place as to artistic merit or historic interest. An imaginative person who has travelled much, often finds his mind over-crowded with

pictures. He values them all, would fain give every one a good place in his gallery; but soon, recognizing the impossibility of doing this, he grows apparently careless as to their disposition. The treasures are his by right of possession, by right of appreciation; what matters it, then, whether they hang on the wall, stand waiting in hall or antechamber, or remain in obscure corners?

Imagination is a Wishing-Cap donated to certain favored mortals at birth, and often preserved, with its magic potency unimpaired, up to extreme age. Whoever is thus singled out by Fortune might give testimony thus:

Putting on this Cap I am no longer the sport of Circumstance, but its master. I wish myself in whatsoever corner of the earth I list; call before me forms of beauty, grace, witchery; place myself in instantaneous communication with best-loved friends. Not that it renders me impervious to icy blasts or burning rays or dangers of tempest. Nor does it shield me from the multitude of petty ills ensuing from utilitarianism, ignorance, and selfishness. All these things come and are felt; but in far less degree than if the Cap were not there.

I do not forget that the care of this Cap is troublesome, for it must always be borne about the person, yet never exposed to worldly elements. Touched by Pride it loses its shape, no longer fits; Vanity makes it limp and colorless; Ostentation renders it so heavy and comfortless that it would fain be got rid of at any price. To have it always serviceable, it must be under the incessant surveillance of Reason. Without this, it is a possession often so embarrassing as to render men



wholly incapable of self-support. In short — even with Reason—it requires so many hard knocks and hazardous experiments before this wizard-cap works beneficently that it is perhaps lucky that the majority of mankind know it only by name.

### III.

## LETTER-WRITERS.

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LETTERS and notes—how they accumulate on one's table, in one's desk! Left from year to year, what a curious pile of contemporary literature they make! To me they represent so many different phases of real life as to be extremely interesting. I never like to destroy them—those even from indifferent people upon indifferent subjects—because they tell so many things otherwise not easily found out.

Letter-Writing might be called one of the social arts. Yet it is not appreciation only which brings about any degree of excellence. A man may love music, yet be himself no musician; may be a moralist, yet be very immoral; know what a good letter is, without being himself able to produce one.

There are men of superb presence who cannot indite a note of ten lines without proclaiming themselves grossly illiterate; there are women of radiant beauty who shrink from writing a simple sentence as from an abstruse problem; others again study the art when children, only to drop it when adults. By a few, of both sexes, it has been carried to so great a perfection as to give delight to many successive generations. There is a strong tendency in the present age to depreciate Letter-Writing.

"Of what use?" cries the spirit of Utilitarianism. "I have steam, electricity, commerce, and agriculture; I see our country growing in extent, wealth, and power. Are not these enough?"

"Yes—more than enough!" retorts the spirit of Beauty. "I grant you all your strength and influence; would do nothing to check your growth. But I, too, have my rightful place in the empire; one from which you cannot justly exclude me. If you ignore this right, you will see how courageously I can defend my birthright!"

Letter-Writing in its mechanical sense is on a level with music, painting, sculpture. It is not the well-executed object, but the unseen force behind the execution which moves us to admiration.

To write good letters, then, something more than penmanship, grammar, construction, and practice is needful; reason, sentiment, tact, grace—above all, enthusiasm—these must utilize the others. A letter cannot be good—judging it as a work of art—unless it interpret a portion of the writer's self. Whatever acquaintance we have with a man from seeing and hearing, it is extremely superficial compared to the impression obtained from a single letter he writes to an intimate friend. Before the world, a man is clothed with reserve, with caution, with the formality essential to self-defence. In a private letter he is in mental dishabille; he speaks his honest sentiments, whether weak or strong, good or bad. We are at liberty to love, to hate, or to be indifferent; but we have the satisfaction of knowing exactly how we stand towards him.

There are people who say: "But, letters may be disguised. The writer may frame his sentiments with

a view to scrutiny: may profess patriotism while dallying with the enemy; simulate friendship while harboring enmity; enlarge upon generosity while practising meanness; inculcate morality while wantonly outraging its doctrines." Granted: letters may, indeed, be the very counterparts of hypocrisy; but this much may be said on the other side. Hypocrisy must be of superfine quality if it escape the penetrating eye of experience. Connoisseurs of men are not more likely to be deceived than connoisseurs of animals, of arts, of merchandise. They judge less by actual measurement, statement, or description, than by divers subtle modes unknown to the outside world.

The chief value of letters as portraits of character is in the very impossibility of deception. Friends flatter us through partiality; enemies detract from our best qualities; people neutral in feeling can give at best but colorless portraits of us; but we ourselves rarely fail in portraiture of self. The ignorant, we may, if we choose, easily deceive; but, strive as we may, in a letter, to produce an impression different from the character we know ourselves to be, it will fail utterly when read by a competent judge. Affectation of knowledge, of virtue, of elegance, of wit, of tenderness—of anything—will be as quickly detected in a letter as in manner.

Whatever is spurious is sure to be recognized at sight by the student of the specialty, whether it be in science or in character. Taking at random any series of letters, it is easy to form from them an exact semblance of the writer: good or bad, poetic or prosaic, high- or low-bred, impulsive or deliberate, he is faithfully limned by his own hand. Having a number

of letters of an individual we need no other biography. In early stages of character-study I believed each biographer's statement; later, I learned that each biographer forms and gives his own conclusions—that my own opinion, if of any value, must be formed mainly from letters. The active daily life of a man is one thing; the quiescent inner life another—and to me a far more interesting—thing. The activity without the thought makes many good citizens, many useful artisans, many industrious workmen, many well-drilled soldiers,—but will not make thinkers, poets, or scientists.

Letters emanating from cultured minds are transcripts of character: but, for all save the favored confidant, these transcripts are invisible. Not until the writers themselves have passed away from this busy human hive are their life-records opened to general perusal. Nothing offers a more curious field for meditation than this certainty that many of the people now living and known to us only by name, appearance, or reputation, will to another generation be intimately known through their letters.

To me it is a half-sad, half-vexing thought. I feel myself capable of so much reverence, so much affection for people when they let me know their real selves, that I am continually regretting the non-knowing which seems inevitable from present life.

Destroying letters received from eminent persons is a species of vandalism nothing can palliate. Several distinguished men have frankly avowed this propensity, adding their regret at having deprived the world of such invaluable records of character.

Maria Edgeworth states that her father shortly before his death burned several thousands of letters, many from persons of great literary celebrity. His motive was fear of wounding or injuring the relatives of the writers.

Sydney Smith vindicated immediate destruction of all letters received, upon the same plea.

Sir Henry Holland excites in me absolute indignation when he confesses that he has destroyed letters of habitual correspondents such as Hallam, Mackintosh, Macaulay, Jeffrey, Lord Aberdeen, Lady Holland, Whewell, Herschel, Guizot, Everett, and others of later date. Eminent as physician, as traveller, as a social favorite, Sir H. Holland undoubtedly was: but his own words prove him no lover of literature.

Whence arises the act which calls forth anathemas of regret from all students of human nature? I believe that any one who destroys letters from distinguished people must be deficient in three qualities: Reverence, Imagination, Sentiment.

Reverence makes us esteem other characters—their thoughts, feelings, hopes, acts. Reverence makes the appreciative friend, the ardent lover, the hero-worshipper.

Applied to literature, Reverence compels us to bow before other minds, hearts, and souls. If we do not acknowledge superiority—by no means essential to homage—we recognize possibilities of development which deeply stir us.

Imagination adds so keen a zest to the appreciation of letters that we read not only what is actually written, but the train of thought and the mood which prompted the writing.

Sentiment is to our psychological life what light, warmth, and color are to the senses. That it may become sickly is no more to be denied than that the body may become pampered. But in its healthful condition, it clothes us with that talismanic armor which enables us to engage in the fiercest warfare with utilitarianism, without forgetting the tolerance due to many of its disciples.

Letter-Writing may be classified as follows :

Business-Letters—Duty-Letters—Love-Letters—Friendship-Letters.

Business-Letters are simply a formula. This once acquired, but a slight amount of mental ability is needed to produce a fair specimen. A business letter states facts, gives direction; asks and answers questions; mentions plans, describes places; discusses projects, suggests schemes. Drawn from the mind by material needs, it aims at conciseness, cultivates coldness, practises decorum. It is not a part of the writer himself; it is a part of the treatment incident to his affairs. None of us can escape the writing of such letters. To acquire the formula accurately and apply it with judgment brings us respect; if we omit the formula, or are careless in its application, we lose credit, our affairs fall into irreparable confusion. A clear brain of practical tendencies made agile by habits of promptness and repetition, disposes of business-letters without effort or discomfort. Far otherwise is it with a brain predisposed to poetry or metaphysics. The letter in this case becomes an incubus which neither reasoning nor remonstrance can remove. The recipient values its uses, knows it

must be answered : but, projecting is easier than execution.

He shrinks from it shudderingly, broods over it morosely, postpones it indefinitely. Finally, goaded by moral shame, he closes with the enemy and compels will to do the part of muscle and training : this conflict is renewed every time a business-letter is exacted of him. The prosaic mind regards this fact as unpardonable puerility, as incurable shiftlessness. The poetic mind knows it to be a truth ineradicable, a misery unavoidable. Some minds have tendencies both plodding and vagrant : their main avenues are crossed with winding paths leading to no particular goal. They are too cosmopolitan to be patriotic, too general to be individual, too digressive to be definite.

To achieve distinction in material affairs a man must train himself to esthetic stoicism. And why ? Because to indulge in Meditation would frustrate every project of advancement ; to lose himself in Revery would bring about endless practical follies ; to wander into the groves of Sentiment would render him incompetent to deal with hard facts, to devise clever business schemes.

To achieve distinction in esthetic fields a man toils incessantly to ignore utilitarianism. He closes his eyes to unsightliness, shuts his ears to discord, diverts his thoughts from material ends. Escape these hindrances to his development he cannot entirely—he and his must live ; but he learns to blunt the edge of their destructive power by simplifying artificial wants, by dealing with them as with matters inimical to his life-aim.

Duty-Letters ! Under this head come all that have



been written under pressure, all that must be answered under pressure.

Letters of congratulation, of condolence; of request, of apology, of presentation; letters from relatives; letters from acquaintances who feel urged, they "know not why, to write just a few lines"—these are some of the varieties which shake our faith in literary comfort as a state worth striving for.

There is always a pile looking at us reproachfully, while suggesting all manner of set phrases and trite commonplaces. What a stupid animal I often seem to myself sitting here with a little sheet before me, and nothing—absolutely nothing—to be got out of my head save a few bare facts! Each line is dragged forth by an effort of will, and when there, is so ungainly that my first impulse is to destroy and put out of sight. But how can I? Here is one to "My dear A."—one of the best of women, ready at all times to render any service to me or other members of the family. She wrote to me—I am very sure—only for duty's sake; and having done so, I must, perforce, do the same thing from the same motive. So I finish my task and mail it, well aware that good A. will have no conception of the labor it cost, that she will simply wonder "why it is so short."

Duty-Letters that come to us are as varied in character as the people who write them: the responses we make are drawn from us by a compulsion which takes alternately the stern shape of respect, the mild one of affection, the neutral one of expediency. An extreme case of this Letter-Writing hangs over me like an ugly fact which can neither be ignored nor evaded. Its fabrication is so onerous that the most insipid re-

marks are evoked only by strenuous exertion. It is a task as wearisome as reading aloud to one whose face reflects no glimmer of appreciation, whether of matter or style. It is not the penning of thoughts which fatigues: it is the telling them to a doubtful listener.

There have been times when, goaded by the rude staring of such a letter on my table, I have written an answer strangely unlike the one required. Called upon to judge its quality, I should be the first to pronounce sentence of "conventional, superficial, coldly conscientious." And why not? Ability to hold a pen and construct sentences does not assume that we can draw at will upon the Self that sways the pen.

Family correspondence often gives a vivid illustration of the Duty-Letter.

Who does not love his own family? Do we not all say, or think, or persuade ourselves that we do? What if we see glaring imperfections in those nearest us, if we are harassed by ever-recurring folly, humiliated by never-amended ignorance, repulsed by coarse tastes, jaded by querulousness!

Even then—or under still harder discipline—the bonds so securely tied by Nature are not easily cut asunder; and if they could be, we should, in most cases, want to join them again. The mere custom of living together unconsciously rivets our affections. If a misfortune befall one member of a household, how quickly the current of sympathy stirs every other member! This love for kindred grows mainly out of association, out of similarity of risks and occurrences. We dare not be supercritical where health and sickness, joy and pain, are so constantly intermingling.

"But," cries the sensitive soul, "they are so different from myself—they will not listen, they cannot understand me! Their tempers and exactions goad me into ebullitions which transform my real self! I cannot be the same with them as with other people!"

And who can reproach the sensitive soul for its outburst of sensibility? Is not affinity of temperament between members of the same family the rarest of exceptions?

Father and daughter may be too much alike in temperament, too unlike in training, to live together in harmony. What to the father appears a wilful spirit of contradiction, is, possibly, but an expression of individuality inherited direct from himself. A mother may accuse a son of irritability, conceit, domineering temper, when, in truth, those traits had their origin in her own injudicious treatment. So in brother and sister—all the elements for affectionate intercourse may exist, while the skill for directing them may be wanting. This often accounts for the seeming anomaly of a young person—of either sex—being warmly loved by friends, while coldly regarded in the family circle.

But when members of a family are psychologically related their letters become types of the noblest intercourse. Parent and child, brother and sister, may then grow into a communion so close that none of the tumults of life can either impair its lustre or cool its ardor. They write as they would talk—unreservedly—because sure of a good hearing. Entire trust in each other renders doubt of feeling or intention impossible. Yet in their letters—as in their lives—they are not imperturbably calm, not uninterruptedly happy. Mutual attachment does not prevent a fre-

quent flashing of the eye, many a hasty retort, countless impatient gestures. But, where saintship is not claimed on either side, clashing of interests only enhances mutual sense of security.

In such cases Family-Letters are not a tax, not a duty.

A mother, for instance, amid many conflicting and pressing affairs, corresponds with a son. If writing could keep pace with her thoughts, doubtless every day would bear witness to deep affection rendered deeper by separation; but even love for a child is permitted only limited demonstration. Possessing culture, this mother condenses her devotion into sentences which persuade gently, warn judiciously, lead tenderly. Such letters are not the product of leisure, but stolen from well-earned hours of rest. Her domestic rôle drains the greater portion of every day; conscientiousness alone enables her to make fitting response to the questionings and aspirations of the younger, untried soul. She remembers the weight of influence a single page may carry: a simple allusion, a bare fact, a pleasing image, a cogent reason, a striking comparison, a word of counsel, or a tone of sympathy—either of these may prove more helpful than pages of didactics.

Love-Letters! these certainly need no commentary. They tell their own story with a simplicity which outweighs style and criticism. They are scintillations from the emotional system; from their color and brilliancy we discover the component parts of that system. They pertain to special epochs of existence which can neither be produced by volition nor imitated

by craft; once written, they remain as landmarks in the territory called Passion. They have the interest of historical records, foreshadowing events to come from events past. The inspiration of Love-Letters is the same in every age; the differences in form and time may be traced in nationality and in phases of education. A laborer is no less strongly stirred by passion than the scholar, although his letters would hardly bear out the assertion.

It is a fashion of flippant people to ridicule Love-Letters—to call them silly, weak, worthless, the reminders of a condition to be blushed for as soon as escaped from, one to be promptly forgotten or ignored. They deny the power of a passion which they themselves are incapable of experiencing. Others affected by it, they regard as actors in a drama which alternately amuses by its situations and vexes by its inconsistencies. What they do not comprehend they hold in contempt; what they despise they flagellate with sneers and sarcasm; or, these weapons not within reach, they pelt with vulgar abuse, with coarse jollity, with calumnious epithets.

But, to people of earnest natures, Love-Letters never appear ridiculous. They read with soul-illuminated eyes, discern tenderness embodied in repetition, passion couched in extravagance. They distinguish the modes of demonstration as influenced by climate, by custom, by temperament. They are not surprised at the apathetic coldness of a Swift, at the tropical fervor of a Heine, at the excessive sensibility of a Lespinasse.

Love-Letters do not dwell exclusively upon the passion which inspires them. Even where it attains its

supreme height there come episodes of calm, in which common facts are expressed in common language. Nothing in nature can be protracted beyond a fixed limit. Passion and sentiment then only share the universal law which prescribes beginning and end, with intervening fluctuations more or less vehement. Nor can passion, however absorbing, so envelop a man or woman as to conceal the actual character.

There are people who maintain that Love and Friendship are in substance the same, the degree of ardor being the sole means of distinction. That there is a strong resemblance—often causing us to take one for the other—no one would deny. But who would assert that resemblance obliterates identity?

Love is not friendship: Friendship is not love: such seems to be the verdict of all who base judgment upon reality. Love has no antecedents: it sees, it adores, it craves. When disappointed, it pines: when denied, its raving is akin to madness. In mettle and endurance it is a warrior iron-clad: in resistance it is an infant. It is higher than law, it is proof against remonstrance, it is wholly beyond the pale of argument. It plans and acts in the same instant, is heightened by obstacles, emboldened by opposition. When in full possession of its victim, it leaves him no middle course: he is either in a heaven of delight or in a hell of agony.

To say that a mortal thus affected is not himself may be true—but not more so than his powerlessness to evade the spell. No man's biography would be complete were the episodes pertaining to this passion omitted. No woman has known the full meaning of

existence until her forces have been tested by the storm which may either revivify or blast. Where there is no susceptibility to Love, there is a lack of warmth in the character which affects the entire career. Life is only half lived, and that half is drudgery without the coloring of imagination.

Let us now glance at Friendship. Here the atmosphere is serener, the lights less lurid, the contrasts less startling. It touches the springs of tenderness, and through their bounteous outpouring gathers in a rich harvest of confidence, tranquillity, content. Without friendship life is dark, gloomy, depressing: vitality flows inward instead of outward, causing disastrous results. The child becomes unchildlike; the man morose; the woman melancholy. With friendship, life is bright, buoyant, exhilarating. It soothes that ceaseless inner clamor for sympathy which is felt—even when not named—in the very earliest years of childhood. It embellishes manhood with force, with dignity, with gentleness. It adds to womanhood the encouragement and hope so urgently needed, permeating every hour of every day with happiness.

Friendship-Letters belong not merely to epochs of life but to its totality. Coming from poetic minds they shadow forth their most delicate characteristics, their deepest capacities. They are irregular in movement, fantastic in form; brilliant in coloring, surprising in changes, fascinating in effects. We cannot decipher every enigma, do not admire every combination; but, we are under an enchantment so agreeable that we neither question nor cavil. No single word, no assemblage of words, no burst of eloquence, can depict the

charm of this intercourse. It is a compact called Thinking Aloud,—one permitting full scope for recreation with no under-current of waste or regret. It is a mental tête-à-tête with one whose personality is attuned to our own.

The double correspondences of Schiller with Caroline and Lottie, of Pope with the Blount sisters, of Walpole with Mary and Agnes Berry, strike me as unnatural. I can understand a man's loving—truly and ardently—two women at the same time. But I protest against the sacrilege of sentiment in thus writing to them in the same breath, in the same strain. The sisters were not alike in thought and feeling,—why treat them as if they were?

In very truth, I believe those letter-writers wrote only *for one, to one*: the dual address was merely a kindness, a stroke of gallantry for the *other*. Who in anything, under any circumstances,—but especially in love or friendship,—can be perfectly honest, perfectly frank?

Friendship-Letters must be written when we are in a glow. Time, brain, feeling,—all these must be merged into the act which establishes mental rapport. Rambling, crude, desultory, our own or others' letters may seem,—but, if they satisfy the recipient, what more is needed? Is there any pleasure in being with people who talk because they fancy they owe it to themselves, or that it will gratify *us*? Ten times No! Under fire of such verbiage we wish ourselves leagues away.

It is the same with letters: unless gratification ensue to both parties they are worse than useless,—they are the quintessence of *ennui*.



One glance, one word,—either of these between friend and friend, says more than a million strokes of the pen. But let separation deprive us of the substance and we are well content to take the symbol. Separation is not necessarily of miles, of countries: it may be of walls, of streets, of custom, or of—that always-puzzling, never-solved problem—Circumstances. If through the last-named, a letter often proves more satisfactory than a face-to-face meeting. Who would not rather forego a delight than partake of it in the presence of an inquisitor, a scoffer, a sneerer? Better a long postponement of an interview than have it under the restraint of irksome conditions: during the interval, letters serve as an ingenious contrivance for converse.

The only counterpoise to the ever-recurring harassments of life is human fellowship. Not that it can stifle doubts, or prevent the wrangling of thoughts, desires, and actions for supremacy! Not that it can blot out those days of conflict with realities which are and must be, but which are none the less exhausting for that cruel decree! Not that it can release us from those hours of suspense when Imagination conjures up Protean fiends whose grasp we struggle in vain to elude! But, to have an ear ready for our confessions, a judgment upon which to lean, a discretion we may safely trust,—these are the substance of endurance, and self-control. It is like passing through a painful ordeal, at the end of which a friend is waiting to receive us with outstretched hand, encouraging smile, reassuring words. This fellowship diffuses around us an atmosphere of content which to others is inexplicable. It makes us amiable with

the surly, patient with the perverse, tolerant with the bigoted.

How little do those around us—even the nearest—suspect the occult agencies which affect our countenance, our manner, our actions! And why attempt to enlighten them? Enough, is it not, if they find us honest in affairs, charitable in judgment, courteous in conduct? Why permit the careless passer-by to set foot in the inner sanctuary,—to con .those cabalistic signs which so perplex the priest himself? Thought is too awful, sentiment too ethereal, for visible embodiment. What we think in one hour could not be uttered in many days: what we feel in one instant would demand hours of toil even to trace: what we aspire to, exacts a lifetime of assiduity ere it takes a shade of color or an atom of consistency which resembles our dreams.

“What do you write about? Where do you find news?” are questions often put to the fluent letter-writer. He smiles at the puerile conception thus implied, and to his correspondent alludes to it somewhat in this tone:

Do you, my friend, get much news from me? Not the kind Gossip likes, truly; you want, not what has been seen and heard, but things thought and felt by me. Can a more agreeable task be imagined than writing to one who is sure to be pleased, provided I speak of myself? who, whatever extravagant notion finds utterance here, knows precisely how to interpret it? who is neither wearied by repetition nor irritated by contradiction? who requires no statistics of conduct, no explanatory clauses? Here I may

be in turn prolix, taciturn, wilful, visionary; may be unreliable, vexing,—everything save unfeeling and unloving,—yet not forfeit my place. Here the soul may improvise at its own free will with the same sense of ease as in solitude. The chords have no beginning, no sequence, no ending; they express simply a mood intelligible to the auditor who knows the instrument. Here I may unbend, expand, feel that sense of rest which comes of being understood; take the refined joy of being loved,—loved with every fault in full view; give vent to the vagaries of individuality without fear of losing the respect and affection which make life so dear.

Do friends who meet in chance hours know what they are going to talk about? No! whatever they say is spontaneous, frank, natural. So with their letters: every mood, from placid content to stormy passion, is unhesitatingly depicted. And what comfort in the thought that even the worst mood will excite no uneasiness, no aversion!

You know that my grumbling of to-day may yield me merriment to-morrow; the reticence of one hour in the next be converted into frankness; that subtleties of imagination may make me appear cold in manner when warm in feeling, exacting when lenient, cruel when kind. My pen, too, is so stiff and untractable as to create despair of intelligibility through these poor marks, often prompting me to say:

Dear Confidant, expect no more writing,—not that interest is abating,—but the inadequacy of this kind of talking excites an impatience difficult to repress. Or, possibly, through some grave error of my own making I am in a mental purgatory: being there, shall

Before you wear a bright smile, use a tone of suavity? No: a Confidant is one to whom we tell freely, gladly, what we should shrink from telling all others. Just as it feels to take a full long breath in the open air after being confined in-doors many hours,—so we are mentally revived after talking to one who intuitively believes in us. If he be engaged in similar pursuits we catch inspiration, just as the birds and the flowers know where to find sustenance,—catch it while yet knowing that the sacred fire that burns at our soul's centre must seek its own distinctive embodiment.

How meagre a gift were your letter to me if the tangible part were all,—how rich since it recalls the experiences of friendship! Held in this light it shows between the lines reiterated proofs of constancy, countless offices of tenderness, copious streams of sympathy. It reveals counsel in dilemmas, support under trials, indulgence for caprices. Whatever annoyances beset me, there is an unfailing restorative in the letter which brings you so near and in such life-likeness. As I read, you are by my side,—you look, speak, listen, as if bodily present,—you are a second self, giving freely what that self would give if here. And are you not partially repaid for your pains by learning how hospitably I entertain this representative of yourself? by knowing that it shares the best I have, holding the right of free entrance to my audience-chamber? that it holds a place there which no other guest, however wise or great, dare occupy?

What if at times your words express an irritation which makes me look up in surprise,—yet without alarm? May you not have been suddenly stung,—

if so, readily pardoned for the cry which escapes your lips, for the reflection of pain on your countenance? I remember of old how quickly you were roused,—but how quickly soothed again. A flash, a frown, a satirical fling, an indignant protest,—these were liable, at any instant, to come,—but sure to be speedily followed by rays of kindness and reassuring words. Reading your letters, I bear always in mind the atmospheric changes of that pleasant region called Friendship. Could we have those wondrous effects of cloud if the sky were permanently blue? Do we not admire its dark shadows as well as its delicate tints or its gorgeous painting?

The friend I call *mine* was presented to me by Destiny: the moment of presentation decided whether I was or was not fitted for him. Having accepted the boon, the finest instincts, the most delicate discrimination, the closest vigilance become conditions of its durability. I must bear my friend not only in mind, but in heart and in hand; must use my feet, my eyes, my tongue for him; must never lose sight of his interests, his wishes, his hopes. The concentration of all thinking and feeling upon him would but symbolize the impulse born of gratitude. Who would not yield the palm to him who lifts from life its heaviest burdens? who rectifies its errors, shields it from danger, enhances its joys?

In early stages of friendship a letter impulsively written may cause days and nights of vexation. What spirit of mischief urged you to it,—having penned, to send it? What would you not give to recall, change, or erase certain sentences! Too late,—sealed, mailed,

delivered,—is the refrain ever ringing through self-consciousness. What the actual result will be you cannot foresee, but the anticipation is damaging to ease of mind,—and with reason, for it may be the loss of a warm friend whom you warmly like, but who thinks of you now with just indignation or disdain. Under this weight of chagrin, no reading, no study, no scene of Nature even, has any attraction; the brows contract gloomily, the lines of the mouth are drawn down, the footsteps are heavy, the voice is listless,—the whole inner life is jarred upon, untuned. With sensibilities thus chafed, it seems as if never before have you been tormented so many consecutive hours by so apparently trivial an act. Exhausted, finally, with miserable regrets and painful surmises, you ask yourself:

Where is your boasted *réason*? Granting even folly with its train of results, what right have you to harp upon it in this absurd manner? Are you not sufficiently punished, that you continue invective long after honest shrift?

Gallant, trusty S.! If he but knew how keenly deplored are those unlucky words—how unlike your real sentiments for him—he would quickly come to your relief. You might write this, but you do not,—it would seem like begging back the good opinion your own act had forfeited,—you simply wait for the answer you dread. Several days—very long ones to you—elapse, each one filled with bitter foreboding. You begin to think you ought to avoid friendships, that they interfere with your life, with its development. You are not of cold temperament, therefore cannot take even pleasure quietly, calmly, as others

do ; you grow eager, impetuous, anxious over it. Stirred by friendship, then, you give up too much of yourself—of thought, feeling, time—to it.

At last your suspense is brought to an end. The expected letter comes, and you open it with a sort of grim satisfaction : better know the worst than be longer in uncertainty. In a few seconds the page is hurriedly scanned, and lo—the cloud of anxiety breaks, you see and feel the bright, genial sunshine. You breathe freely, are once more restored to equanimity. Spite of your thoughtlessness, S. is as true as steel. He never alludes to it,—on the contrary, seems actually pleased with the burden of the supposed mischievous letter.

Ah—what a relief ! Could it have been Imagination that led you that breathless race of Possibilities ? Not wholly : you are well aware that save under unbalanced impulse the letter never could have been sent,—that to a less generous correspondent, it might easily have caused all the grievous results you feared.

## IV.

### FOOLISH VIRGINS.

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THEY are of every age; found in every class of society; they represent all the varied influences of ignorance, error, and idleness. Enough to glance at a few prominent types.

Here is one born in the sovereignty of Fashion. She enters her teens with a thorough understanding of her personal value; hair, eyes, figure, style,—these constitute the motive-power of existence. She is going to school when we first meet her. The fact is suggestive, and a few questions are ventured: the answers are prompt and to the point.

Education, to her, is a something to be bought like a trousseau, the quality and variety dependent upon the purse of the buyer. She consents to go to school, —therefore believes she is being educated. Ignorant, and perfectly satisfied to remain so, she evades every task with a nonchalance impervious to reproach, incapable of stimulant: she exemplifies finely the obstinacy of stupidity. So dogged a resistance does she offer to enlightenment that she brands upon her teacher sundry conclusions which partially indemnify him for exhaustion. In one department only is there a vital interest—in that called Accomplishments.



These flimsy decorations she grasps at with avidity, deeming them essential to anticipated future triumphs. She plays on the piano with or without skill; sings like a prima donna,—save that force and feeling are omitted; draws and paints,—not after Nature,—but with cold, lifeless mechanism; dances with vigor and whatever of grace the trammels of costume permit; takes lessons in foreign languages under the comfortable conviction that her masters are responsible for accent, grammar, and fluency. One year follows another in humdrum repetition until, finally, emancipation is jubilantly welcomed. Her education is “finished.” Now let the delights of freedom flow in with unstinted measure!

In full bloom she is a specimen of human growth which excites amazement and pity in equal parts. Whence that leaden expression of countenance? that significantly vapid giggle? that contemptuous toss of the head? that artificial manner? that shallow meandering of words? Youth, health, prosperous surroundings,—ought not these to give elasticity of step, melody of voice, exuberant spirits? They ought,—but here they do not. In the first flush of girlhood she is not girlish.

The delicate tints natural to this young plant lacking, what is found in their place? First of all, clothing apparel in superfluity, and wholly regardless of connection between itself and the wearer. It is not a thing of degree, of modification, of adaptation: it is an absolute entity. The most incongruous models in or out of print are scrupulously copied only to produce discordant effects and pungent sarcasms. In full dress, for instance, she is décolletée à l'outrance,

this even when totally deficient in the embonpoint which alone renders the mode justifiable. Could she hear the disparaging remarks of idle gazers, her self-love would receive a painful, but perhaps beneficial shock. "That skeleton, poor girl!" "Skin and bones!"—such is their refrain. And why not? Surely, meagreness and angularity are the reverse of pleasing! Why, then, in the name of Beauty, should she challenge public attention to those personal defects? Why voluntarily expose what otherwise would remain in seemly obscurity? But the girl is deaf to Beauty's appeal: she continues her whimsical metamorphoses until overthrown by exhaustion—physical or pecuniary.

Her actions are a transcript of her appearance. From the first glimmering of conscious thought her brain wrestles with the matrimonial problem called an "Establishment." Costly clothing, handsome house, stylish equipage, abundant jewelry,—these to her pitiously-distorted nature represent the choicest blessings of marriage. Under this delusion she spends lavishly the candor and freshness of girlhood. To slake her thirst for finery, to satisfy her greed for ostentation, is the raging ambition of her diminutive soul. Failing to consummate her highest aim, she approximates her standard of bliss by accepting the weightiest purse offered by her suitors.

The girl of Fashion has her puny imitator who, up to the extremest limits of capability, profits by her example. Such an one cannot see why the garment worn by the daughter of the millionaire should not be counterfeited by the daughter of the millionaire's

clerk. Upon this principle she drains the parental purse for cheap material and paltry ornaments. Next, she spends days and nights in constructing the coveted article she cannot afford to buy. Into this process she puts a furious energy: no laborer, no savant, no inventor, no artist, ever worked more strenuously. How her arms ache! How head and chest suffer! How terribly nerves are strained! But what of this? With the hydra-headed labor before her she dare not rest. Its intricacies demand stringent application, its technicalities are the breath of life to her.

If, perchance, she have a momentary perception of her spurious industry, her condition is still worse. Bodily exhaustion, mental chafing, moral chagrin,—these possess and torment her. If they burn in a warning which others of her sex tremble at,—perhaps profit by,—it is the utmost her existence can achieve. The garment completed, it is eagerly donned; but the end is missed. To those who know its origin she is an object of animadversion; those who do not know, nod approval merely because the colors are false.

A pretty girl! Is not this something we all like? No need to define form, features, or complexion; that she is “pretty” is enough. Upon this we welcome her with warm predisposition to friendliness. Here is one just introduced,—but, alas, in less than five minutes anticipation is chilled. The inviting mouth has been unsealed only to give vent to a volubility which, upon a first acquaintance, is somewhat startling. How she rattles on, barely stopping for breath! What a restless, uneasy sensation it produces! Where she has been, what doing, what going to do, what she

thinks of this place, that place, places in general, what there is to look at, chaffer for, purchase, how she feels, does not feel, expects to feel, people she sees, knows, loves, hates,—all this is poured out in a thin shrill monotone to produce—what?

From a child it would be amusing. But this is *not* a child; it is a young girl possessing the gift of speech in so overpowering a degree that we wish her struck dumb. It is composed of sundry mongrel dialects of which the most jarring is called Chattering. How she acquired this, how she retains it, how she comes to like it,—she alone can explain! Evidently, she glories in it, looks upon it as the chief attribute of youthful vivacity, a fitting accompaniment to bright eyes and round cheeks. We listen because we cannot escape; are patient under the ordeal through force of courtesy; give attention from self-respect, not from interest in the language falling about us. Amid the confusion of ideas excited by the motley gathering of sentences, we answer at random, at cross-purposes, at hap-hazard. Luckily, this is of no consequence: the girl, intent upon carrying her point, neither reads her listener's countenance nor suspects the misery she inflicts.

She deals so lavishly in superlatives that no distinction is perceptible between daily trifles and extraordinary events. A splintered vase and an earthquake call forth the same ejaculations of horror; the last sermon and the last opera go hand in hand; a woman's bonnet is placed on a level with her brain, the two commented upon with impartial eloquence. Men are either "splendid" or "hateful" in proportion to their appreciation of herself. Everybody—old friend or to-

day's acquaintance—is treated alike. All are recipients of the bits of gossip, the streaks of sentiment, and the dashes of prejudice which constitute the *mélange*.

Words gush forth until they run over and deluge the fact or narration. They are rash, inconsiderate, uncourteous words. They berate a child for doing childish things with an air of consummate justice; rasp a dependant's feelings with unabashed presumption; purloin a good name or misconstrue a charitable deed with unflinching effrontery. They affirm, deny, contradict; discuss, dogmatize, harangue; vex, irritate, stab,—all with equal self-complacency. They know no restraint, no limit, no cessation. They rush headlong, scattering far and wide the jangling discord which devastates human sensibilities.

Yet,—while thus suffering we are, forsooth, called upon to condone it because the offender is a “young and giddy girl!” But we refuse point-blank. We desire instant relief, and cannot stop to inquire into cause or motive. Roused by the tumult besieging our ears, we mentally stamp our feet and indignantly demand:

What does this girl mean? What does she want to tell? Where is the connection? where the sequence? Is she devoid of common sense, intoxicated with glibness, possessed by extravaganza?

If the echo of our questioning chance to reach her, she smiles derisively at our callousness to youthful charms, and hastens on in search of fresh victims.

Sensationalism,—this is the insignia of the next who arrests attention. She must set the world agog

at whatever cost of manners or morals. To be gazed at, followed after, talked about,—these to her are synonymes of admiration. Beginning with her head and ending with her heels, she continually violates every natural grace, every acquired taste. Her monstrosities of attire make plebeians stare, aristocrats shudder. Her presence sends esthetic shocks through all men and through all women not of her class. Deformity, not symmetry,—is the motto she dresses and lives by.

To insure a full supply of the vulgar homage her nature craves, a succession of fantastic freaks must be devised. New sensations exact new excesses. What if her demonstrations are palpably gross? Glaring color and loud tones are needful to attract the apathetic loungers whom she condescends to amuse. To this end the benighted girl so increases her dissipations that finally they scruple at nothing short of downright social ostracism. More than one act of deep-dyed levity illustrates the corroding consequences to her sex, of freedom ungoverned by reason, uninfluenced by delicacy, unchecked by barriers.

She makes successive matrimonial engagements as lightly as if they meant a dance or a drive. She breaks them again with equal sang-froid, avowing boldly that she only wanted the flattery and the presents the temporary compact induced. She even deliberately enters matrimonial bonds intending to go out of them whenever the whim so seizes her; or, commits bigamy with all the audacity of an adventuress bent on notoriety. When, for either of these offences, the law claims its rights, she can make no stronger defence than the heedlessness of youth!

The most anomalous fact in her career is an unblushing claim to respect because of "Good Family"! Is, then, the world so to stultify itself as to yield honorable consideration at mere mention of a name, a clan, an ancestry? To grant a girl license to violate social justice and yet retain her high position in the realm of girlhood? The gods of Civilization forbid! The world is too shrewd to be thus cajoled. It hears the name of the family, acknowledges the pedigree up to merit-mark, accepts gladly the intrinsic superiority it offers. Beyond this it declines to go. It cannot be wheedled into taking dross instead of pure metal; never mistakes the flaunting banner of Sensationalism for the proud crest of Genuineness.

The girl herself is too obtuse to be hurt by the world's verdict. She braves public opinion, scoffs at private remonstrance; her meretriciousness infects her entire social area, and drives thoughtful people into grave doubts as to democratic methods of training. If Modesty—the chief charm of girlhood—is in danger of assault, we are justified in calling upon the most stringent aids aristocratic surveillance can furnish. Good girls, pretty girls, clever girls, quiet girls, vivacious girls, brilliant girls, beautiful girls, ugly girls,—one and all have an honorable place in society. In their behalf let it be persistently demanded that the Sensation-Girl be blackballed from refined circles.

Another distinctive type is produced by Sentimentalism. An ordinary school routine added to total absence of intelligent home influence, has left this young girl an overplus of leisure to be devoted to

sweetmeats and novels. Under a long course of this twofold stimulus the emotions acquire a strangely-perverted force. Every-day life becomes affected with distasteful monotony. The people long-known seem prosy, tedious; those newly acquainted with are devoid of beauty, wanting in spirit. The activities of home are wearisome drudgery; the pursuits of society are tame and colorless. In brilliant contrast with these are the stirring adventures of fictitious life. Here, she thinks, are scenes worth participating in, people worth admiration and sympathy!

If curiosity, or hope, or necessity induce her to partake of the world's usual pastimes, she returns home laden with disappointment. Are those the diversions she must accept? Those the men and women she must be content with? Why are they in all respects so unlike those encountered in romances? Surely the people there depicted must have their prototypes somewhere in the real world! So she firmly believes, and resolutely bends herself to finding them. The search is long, indefatigable, and, of course, fruitless.

The privilege of Romance is to idealize Reality, not to change its essential features. But of this the poor girl is ignorant. She takes her view of the world from one position only, thus forming sadly-mistaken impressions. Her ideas are awry, her opinions half fledged, her observations superficial. She judges people, not by laws of nature, but by highly-colored tales of fiction. Judging thus, she finds her heroes of real life wholly lacking in the heroic qualities her fancy depicts, and turns from them with ill-concealed repugnance.

With antidotes of reason administered in early girl-



hood Sentimentalism might have been arrested. A novel cannot injure a girl if a chapter of real life be held up by its side and a judicious comparison instituted. But in this case, evidently, antidotes were not at hand, and the poison worked its destructive way.

She leads a wearily-unsatisfactory life, without even the slender solace of knowing the cause. Alternately elated by hope and depressed by failure, she is utterly unfitted for any responsible post. Her realization of this, perchance her tearfulness over it, avail nothing in changing her condition. To the world she is nothing save a silly girl looking for what she will never find, wasting all her youth in a barren search. Possibly, years may bring her experiences which shall modify her early-imbibed falsities, and make the latter half of her life more joyous than the first half.

The ranks are still full, but we notice a change in the general aspect of face and form. This arises, we are told, from a melancholy truth called Uncertain Age. Here are various specimens who have outlived girlhood without securing the womanly substitutes,—earnestness and dignity.

“A beauty and a belle! this I once was!” whispers one of these elderly young women. We do not doubt her assertion, although involuntarily wondering why she does not now abdicate in favor of younger claimants for those honors. She has seen many “Seasons,” is well versed in the world’s ways; to her nothing is novel, nothing attractive, nothing gay. Her face would still be a handsome one were it not so anxious, so stern, so vacant. There is no light, no warmth,

there: it has all the rigidity of a statue. Knowing her brilliant past, we cannot help regarding her with interest and a certain kind of admiration; but underlying these is a peculiar consciousness of pity. There is that in her walk, manner, and appearance which is unpleasantly suggestive of fashion-plates, while her voice sounds dull and spiritless. She looks as if natural abilities were not insignificant, but as if unceasing vigilance in preserving intact the reputation of a belle had deadened and rendered them useless. A single glance at her brings up in quick succession sundry phases of a belle's life,—its exactions, its triumphs, its humiliations. It sets us to wondering how much real satisfaction she derived from her course, and whether she ever sought anything better. There is here no repose, no deep inner life to fall back upon with a sense of relief after exposure to the world's tumult. Her individuality seems ceaselessly murmuring:

"I was once a beauty and a belle. My life-work is over: I am now useless!"

Yet she herself falls into the egregious mistake of fancying that to other people she still appears young. Her juvenilities of dress suggest invidious comparisons with her years; her assumed artlessness of speech provokes ridicule; her unschooled impulses induce manifestations so indiscreet as to justify the malicious interpretation of Gossip. Could it be otherwise when a woman at forty lives the same life precisely as at twenty, sustaining her position only through amazing energy and extravagant hope?

Weary unto death of doing the things which have long since lost their zest, she yet forces herself into

that doing with stolid determination. Sated with frivolity, she drags its chains to the bitter end: arrived there, she learns with dismay that her worthless life is made so—not by the gift of beauty, not by the rigors of celibacy, but—by emptiness of purpose. Inwardly she is a moaning, groaning, long-faced woman: outwardly she is a jaunty, simpering, prinking woman who imposes upon no one—save herself.

The decayed beauty crumbles into dust, leaving a faint perfume of long-forgotten conquests, long-lost opportunities.

“I have a Vocation!” Such is the introductory phrase of the next who rivets the eye. She is keen-witted, bitter-tongued, provokingly inquisitorial. Her bearing suggests masculine activity without its strength; her tactics are a painful jarring of feminine instincts; her countenance shows well-marked traces of damaged prospects. Her vocation has extracted from her womanhood all its sweetness, all its coloring; it now radiates only stiffness, aridity, acrimony.

“Reform! Reform!” is her rallying cry. But, both principle and practice apply to other people only—not to herself. Under its demoniac spell she cavils, denounces, vociferates,—this with no greater result than to proclaim far and wide her own untenable position. Neither persuasion nor opposition avails, however, to check her career: until her ill-directed forces spend themselves there is no hope of abatement. Meanwhile, the world alternately objects, tolerates, resists, holds its breath, and—moves on.

Strong-willed, repellent Reformer! Her personality is like a blast from an iceberg penetrating the

thickest and warmest wraps of sentiment. She is a fatality boldly invading the peaceful haunts of domesticity to rouse its inmates to a phantom-fight. "Masculine Oppression!" "Feminine Rights!" These resound in our bewildered ears until compelled in self-defence to let their meaning work its way into consciousness. Before venturing to form conclusions we turn to the ungracious disturber and ask:

Do you mean to assert that woman's physical strength is equal to that of man's? that her intellect can compare with his in sustained power? Is she to be trained under the same system? to seek the same kinds of labor? the same fields in science, in literature, in society? By enlisting under your standard will she be the better qualified to fulfil nature's designs? Before these questions are half enunciated a volley of contemptuous answers is levelled at us.

Yes! poor benighted creatures! Yes! yes! I say to all your pitiful inquiries. Throughout all the past woman has been a slave to man,—she is so still! She consults only *his* wishes, bends to *his* whims, craves *his* admiration, and feels herself well rewarded, forsooth, if she obtains *his* love! In this degradation she cares not what becomes of the rest of the world. She ignores politics, turns a listless ear to science, opens her eyes in stupid wonder at my social innovations. I despise her imbecility more than words can express! I shall never, never rest until I have dragged her out of it by sheer persistence!

Enough! Judging from tone of voice and gesture the Reformer is in a chronic state of ill-temper. Dis-jointed mentally herself, she strives indefatigably to put all other women into the same unhappy condition.

To effect this end no weak spot in the domestic organization is left unprobed. War means combined strategy, attack, and perseverance. These the Reformer fearlessly uses in her assaults. Man's strength, selfishness, temper, arrogance, despotism,—these are the weapons she hurls right and left at feminine ears. But the sole end she accomplishes is disastrous defeat; on every fair woman's forehead it is blazoned in these words,—

My glory is in your so-called slavery!

The Foolish Virgin of literary proclivities now comes in sight. Casually glanced at, she appears restless, ill at ease, as if in her position by accident, not choice. She studies, she discusses, she writes,—but not earnestly, not heartily. Bred on prejudices and customs, she cannot outgrow their effect. While strikingly “blue” in mental complexion, she vainly attempts to conceal the tint with fatuous hypocrisies. She toils to bring about an impossible compatibility between life-literary and life-conventional. Failing in this, she weakly compromises, putting half of her intellect into literary ventures, half of it into enervating social puerilities. Possibly she dubs this compromise “duty to family,” or “claims of society,” which nomenclature makes it none the less hurtful in effect.

The incessant clashing between her sense of ability and her reiterated frittering wears away self-respect. Conscious of dereliction, she becomes irritable towards herself, unjust to others. Hearing her professions, we might suppose she had entered upon her career in good faith, resolved to develop her mental capacities to the uttermost. Seeing her actions, we infer that

she expects honors to flow in through pure ardor of wishing, instead of through zealous assiduity. For other women who are inconsistent there are all the grades of extenuation due to weaker reasoning powers. For this woman there is none, because her vacillation is the sole cause of her mental sterility. Knowing what impairs health, what dulls the brain, what warps executive ability, she is justly held responsible for every violation of that knowledge. By yielding to petty distractions which drain vitality she gradually weakens the productive force. Aims and desires still exist; but these without correspondent action serve only to make her a conspicuous target for every simpleton who chooses to fling his disparaging epithet of Blue-Stocking.

Smarting under this, she lowers her standard of excellence and adopts any means which will spread her name or purchase adherents. She entertains the masses by publishing flame-colored pictures of life; she startles the minority into attention by daring theories, trashy improbabilities, unnatural creations. Popularity attained, she laps herself in its soft folds, loses herself in a fleeting ecstasy. But, at heart there is no repose, no consciousness of having helped humanity, no sedative for life's excitements. She is classed in the long category of women who for a temporary success forfeit their highest convictions and purest sentiments.

Nothing-To-Do is a qualification which brings many middle-aged members into this troop. Here is one who was born dowerless of personal charms: in her best epoch, youth was her sole attraction. Having

this, however, she formed matrimonial plans quite as liberally, if not as ambitiously, as her fairer sisters. Those failing—with or without fault of her own—she never replaced them by plans of any other nature. In this irresponsible state she drifts into lazy inanities, into mischief-making propensities, into ridiculous situations. The sole remedy—occupation—may or may not be forced upon her by circumstances. If not, she is a torment to her neighbors, a misery to herself, a dead weight upon society. Her personality engenders those miserable aspersions upon Spinsterhood which terrify many timorous young women into matrimonial perjury.

Marriage at all hazards! is the watchword of those aspersions. At its sound, ringing through the land, one weak woman after another gives her signature to a conjugal contract which entails infinitely greater wretchedness than vows of perpetual singleness.

The Nothing-To-Do woman, in addition to general supineness, adopts sundry phenomenal habits—Affectation, for instance. Under this spell, she goes to concerts when her appreciation of music is too feeble to distinguish between a march and a symphony. She sits through operas again and again, even when endorsing Southey's opinion that "it is high treason against common sense." She spends hours in a picture-gallery when her ideas of Art are still more crude than her perceptions of Nature. She reads—or pretends to read—books in vogue or of classic fame. Finding nothing in them which appeals to her calibre, she is, naturally, wearied, and concludes that she is not literary. In talking, her words are out of harmony with her manner and features. There come,

possibly, well-turned sentences relating to intelligent people, clever books, extensive travels. But, they fail to impart any idea of proprietorship as regards the speaker; they sound as if recited,—even then without appreciation of the sense. Thought is shorn of its strength, Feeling stripped of its delicacy, Truth of its earnestness. Whatever she says is devoid of pith and fervor: it is as if flavored with insipid Extract of Advantages. We cannot respond—remain wholly unmoved—although the topics broached usually warm us quickly enough. We are puzzled to account for the non-effect of her fluency, but dismiss the subject as troublesome. Later,—it may be hours or days,—an explanation suddenly looms up. Affectation was the barrier that checked communication between us.

Poor misguided woman! Can she not see that artifice defeats the only feeble aim she has,—the regard of others? Does she not know that intellect, elegance, or grace can produce due effect only when held by right of inheritance or of acquisition?—that to assume them must inevitably bring upon her either charitable pity or malevolent contempt?

The procession is still passing, but our eyes are sensible of that fatigue which follows long gazing at costumes, colors, forms, and faces. Besides, we know that Foolish Virgins constitute only a portion—a small one—of womankind; that by simply looking in another direction scores and scores of girls totally different may be seen,—seen, admired, and loved. Moreover, who would deny that Foolish Virgins often develop into wise matrons? Nature's economy



contrives to get good out of evil, although not without loss and pain to the individual. In hundreds of cases where girls might pass a bright, joyous girlhood, a blighting influence—from ignorance somewhere—fastens upon and cripples their fairest faculties.

OVERRATING OUR NEIGHBORS.

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IF I understand the general voice of society, it is that people are much more likely to overrate *themselves* than their neighbors. Perhaps it is so—perhaps I may come to think so. Pending the uncertainty, I feel profound sympathy for those who live half a lifetime—often a whole one—before learning the dismal fact that they have lost themselves through overrating others.

There is D., for instance, a good fellow with more than an average of the world's prizes; yet, in his hands both goodness and prizes are shorn of their potency. He excites no attention, no curiosity, no strong feeling of any kind. Wherever he is, people accord him that negative respect which plainly implies indifference. He rarely expresses a decided opinion upon any subject,—when he does, is visibly humiliated by the dissent of others. If he allude to his house, to his land, to his condition, it is in terms of disparagement, intimating how much better they might, or ought to be. In his own eyes he is of extremely small importance. In this, the world is prompt to agree with him,—it takes him at his own valuation, adding a half-contemptuous shrug, which means:

"Poor fellow! he is too meek, he will never get along." The world is right as to results, but careless as to their origin.

Self-distrust creates in D. an insensate timidity—fear of this, fear of that, fear of everything and everybody. "Other People" to him means a Goblin with withering eye, sneering tone, and malignant influence. He hates it—yet bows to it, submits his will to it, denies his very soul her rights—nay, if much pushed, would sell it to the Goblin at its own price. He fancies that whatever comes from an outside source is better than what originates within. This prompts him to lean even upon a doubtful prop, rather than stand alone with personal conviction or intuition. It is a source of vacillation—that balancing between affirmation and denial which makes the decision of one hour the torment of the next. Desire to do, desire to take,—these are so rudely confronted with possible consequences, that self-denial seems less painful than risk.

He estimates men and women from a subjective stand-point, transferring his own personality into his judgment, giving his own interpretation to their words and actions. He overrates others because he himself is generous, or energetic, or tolerant. Easy to see where such a false valuation of people would lead a man, how it would make him a nonentity without the solace of self-conceit.

Let us now suppose D. brought—not suddenly, but through reiterated sharp experiences—to self-enlightenment. Arrived, say at middle-age, he discovers that people are not at all as he once rated them, and that to see them as they are he must look at them

from an objective stand-point. He learns, in short, that overrating others is a fallacy,—one requiring strong antidotes. What are they? where found? how applied?

Summing up the results of inquiry, they sound something like this:

Do you, D., realize that the habit of overrating has made you a miserably worthless fellow? that to save even a remnant of your selfhood, you must instantly begin to do many strange, many apparently inconsistent things? First of all, you must cultivate Recklessness,—cultivate it earnestly, persistently. What heretofore you have shrunk from as bold and rash, is now and hereafter just the thing to be done. Reckless thinking, reckless feeling, reckless doing,—these are to be your watchwords. If you doubt and hesitate, recall the past, how from the very decisions or actions which at the time seemed horribly daring, you derived the only absolute satisfaction of your life.

Second: avoid Familiarity as the certain bane of Self-Respect. Do not your cheeks still tingle at the jest or the scorn dropping from a neighbor's lip, knowing that your shame was justly incurred by a previous laxity of speech or manner? Throwing frankness before ignorance and vulgarity,—as you did,—must not this of necessity lead to misconstruction?

Or, when you wrote those words—honest but inappropriate—to B., and afterwards found that what with you had been earnest feeling had to her proved a source of idle merriment. To be sure, you quickly shut the mental door that separated your individuality from hers, resolved that henceforth no weak good-

nature should permit such an intruder. But, even at the instant of receiving the sting, you knew you deserved it; for, save through undue familiarity on your part, there could have been no opportunity of giving it. Better undeviating commonplaces in a letter than an indiscreetness which might lead to rude handling.

Or, when you, D., associated—in those days you well remember—with C., did you not feel that mentally he was not your equal, consequently, that the bond made you appear illogical, abnormal? Did you not find, later, that the fact of companionship with C. was a cause of chagrin to you, besides marring your prospects in a certain influential quarter where otherwise you were in good repute?

“Yes”—to both of these queries. Your natural impulse was to admire others. You over-estimated C. at the outset, and through that were drawn into precipitate judgment. When—as soon happened—too much familiarity with an inferior made the tie irksome, you saw yourself forced to break it. Yet, because it pained you to give pain you strove to avoid the issue, and lingered in unworthy chains. Finally, when it was over—when C. was offended and others called you fickle-minded—you began to have some understanding of the thing called Self-Respect,—of the way to acquire and keep it.

Third: regulate your Sympathies. These are, doubtless, meant for something good,—but, in their present untutored state see how they cripple you! All who come within your range draw upon your thoughts and feelings. You cannot see even utter strangers without being forced to yield to them a portion of your vitality, without dwelling unduly upon

what they were, are, or may be. Even when reason points out your course, sympathy outstrips the will, causing it to be influenced by others' whims, shaken by their opposition, made miserable by their misery.

Keen sympathies call for as much discipline as strong passions. To become warmly interested in another being necessitates the temporary suspension of your own life: and oft-repeated suspensions are sure to end in collapse.

Glance for an instant at unsympathetic people, and profit—if you can—by the contrast.

They never have violent desires or unavailing regrets. They are entirely proper in their manners, and rarely get into trouble. They are cool in judgment, decisive in action. They see clearly others' deficiencies and mistakes, and unhesitatingly call them by their right names; nor do they make any attempt to palliate, or absolve. They are not fretted by scruples, torn by doubts, weakened by tenderness. Whatever happens, they are positive, immovable, complacent. If intellectual, they are dogmatic, controversial, denunciatory: if illiterate, they are intractable, obstinate, bigoted.

Unsympathetic people make the most "useful" members of society. Seeing only the thing they are directly engaged upon, they finish it with promptness. They are not worried, as sympathetic people are, with an infinity of other things they ought or want to do. Being thus free from hindrances, they carry out their purposes without delay. Their minds, not distracted by conflicting theories, wishes, and projects, concentrate upon the matter in hand.

Concentration produces tangible results. Given an equal amount of physical or mental strength, unsympathetic people appear to far greater advantage than their more sensitive neighbors. They furnish a clue to the mystery called Accomplishing Much. Yet,—strange to say,—the most “useful” members of society are not the most desirable as companions. Were choice possible, you are quite sure you would take unsympathetic people to do your work, but sympathetic ones to live with.

Finally, you, D., feel that by constant use of these antidotes you may eventually attain to that equilibrium of mind commonly called philosophical, and prized by you beyond all else.

To overrate others is to establish a false relation between them and ourselves, to bring about endless complications of disappointment, vexation, humiliation. It makes us see beauty where deformity exists; imagine depth where there is shallowness; expect generosity where meanness is the ruling motive; count upon strength when only weakness can be evoked.

Mr. A. is a gentleman who has a fair amount of general information, strongly infused with self-esteem. When he speaks of his family, of his books, of his pictures, of his horses, of his plants, of his friends—of anything belonging to him—it is in tones of full conviction as to their superior quality. His judgment having chosen an article is all-sufficient to prove its worth. The same peculiarity is noticeable in his opinions; their intrinsic value is so clear to him that he thinks it needless to listen to those of other people. A difference of statement strikes him

as a species of insolence; argument, as sheer waste of time and energy; opposition ruffles him like a personal affront.

It is the same with his tastes: when he says: "I like this or that," it means that this fiat must for ever settle—not his personal liking merely—but the liking of everybody else. If those near him—especially those subordinate—presume to evince ever so slight a grade of dissent, so much the worse for them.

Mr. A.'s personality is a something so strong, so sweeping, that it gets far more than it deserves. Not, of course, from men and women of the world. They read him through and through, smile at his foibles, value him simply for what he has, or does, or is, in the community. But people of little world-experience are sadly imposed upon. They give respect in superabundance, take the whole man, without demur, at his own inflated valuation. I remember well how uncomfortably inferior I used to feel in Mr. A.'s presence. If the talk was of acquaintance, he quickly intimated that *mine* were nobodies compared to his; if upon books, that *I* had read nothing worth the mention; if upon travel, that *I* had passed by all the places and things of real interest, and might as well have stayed at home.

Not that there was any intention on his part to bring about these unpleasant sensations. On the contrary, there were times when he really wanted to please; but, throughout his words, smiles, and attentions ran a vivid streak of condescension which both irritated and depressed me. It produced a conviction that if my opinion should openly clash with his, he would think me either an idiot or an enemy.



Needless to say, this effect was simply the overrating of a young girl new to the world. Later, when more varied experiences brought a somewhat clearer mental vision, there was quite another judgment. I saw then that Mr. A. was an admirable citizen, whose probity and liberality deserved sincere respect; but, that he was not the man of extraordinary attainments I once thought him.

Young Mrs. B. offers another illustration of self-esteem exacting unfair tribute from others. She has a dainty individuality, being pretty to look at, graceful in bearing, refined in tastes. She has a bright smile, ready wit, and winning manner, so that wherever she goes, people say:

"What a charming young woman!"

And so she is—very charming indeed—when not annoyed, or contradicted, or advised, or thwarted in any way. In either of these contingencies, she is quite the reverse.

She cannot tolerate weakness, error, ignorance, vulgarity, least of all,—neglect of herself. Whoever offends in one of these points comes under the ban of her displeasure. And for how long? Alack! this *gentle* woman, once offended, is always offended: stern, implacable, she never abates one jot of her first resentment. Acting fearlessly upon this principle, she sows a bitterness which spreads over many human hearts. She possesses fine sensibilities,—so fine that the most delicate shades of character act and react upon her incessantly. Yet, she is apparently blind to the fact that other people have similar sensibilities which her conduct ruthlessly disregards.

If Mrs. B.'s good opinion and affection are to be retained, the weapon called Tact must be always at hand. Without this, it would not be possible to live with her upon amicable terms; with it, the daily intercourse is very pleasant, so long as no unrefined or obnoxious person comes upon the scene.

In brief, she can neither adapt herself to other people nor bear with the uncongenial kind. Moreover, she cannot see the inconsistency of exacting the utmost consideration from others, while refusing to practise the rudiments of forbearance towards those "others."

Two questions arise:

Is this young woman aware of this dark spot on her personality?

If aware, can she not cover it with self-control?

With every desire for fairness, only negative answers can be given, and for this reason. Her mind, although very active, is appreciative only up to a certain point. It sees grace and beauty, it values dignity and strength; but, it never penetrates the surface, cannot understand principles, seems incapable of analyzing the defects which repulse her. Once prejudiced against another person, she never tries either to overcome or to modify the sentiment; nor could she understand the rebuke if the object of her dislike were to retort:

Pray, madam, are you perfect? Have you yourself no weak points, no ugly traits?

There is one thing, however, in which Mrs. B. can hardly be rated too high. She has that excellent self-control which keeps manner, countenance, and tongue in abeyance. And although intolerance causes her to exercise it only in behalf of her own interests, it nevertheless calls forth my genuine admiration.

A discussion, for instance, arises in the family circle, taking—as discussions often will—an unlucky personal coloring. At such a moment, when every sensitive soul around her is on the rack of discomfort, this woman shows great composure and prudence. Not a word escapes her lips, not a shade of assent or dissent passes over her features. Quick to resent attacks—real or fancied—upon her own personality, she is rarely moved by the annoyances or embarrassments of others. However warm the argument waxes, she preserves that calm neutrality which to one of ardent temperament is more vexing than even unwise partisanship. Mrs. B. is of mature age, as years count, but lacking the mental acumen which produces *growth* of character, it is plain that no external influence can change her. What she is now, she will be to the end of time.

What, then, in our relations with her, is the safest course?

Simply this: not to overrate her. Allowing her the full advantage of every good quality, of every charm she possesses, yet, as a whole to consider her incompetent—through an overplus of self-esteem—to exercise tolerance towards others.

Why does one woman listen with attention to the opinions of others, receiving them with respect if not with credulity? Why does she attribute to people motives in accord with her own ideas of honor or of refinement, this often in direct opposition to her own intuitions? Simply because she has more veneration than self-esteem.

Why does another woman evince a marked disdain

for other people, their ideas, wishes, and feelings? Why, even in her affections, is there more of exaction or of passion than of devotion? Because in her organization there is a preponderance of self-esteem.

Of what use to note these cases or others,—that one person has a violent temper, that another is exasperatingly meek, another insufferably lazy, another disagreeably arrogant? Of use only because of the possibility of counteracting by education every deficiency or excess.

Overrating creates erroneous judgment. Attributing to E. qualities he does not possess, you expect him to act contrary to Nature. This expectation disappointed, judgment revenges itself, exclaiming: E. is not the man you took him for! But, in reality, he is precisely the same as when first known,—the overrating him was the error. Suppose him incapable of fine distinctions between right and wrong, and acting in accordance with such incapacity. Compelled to have business or social relations with him, what are you to do? Assuredly, the first step would be not to expect him to act as a man of higher moral tone would act.

Estimating him fairly, you are on your guard; you protect yourself or your interests as best you may. You are not surprised when E.'s conduct shocks your moral sense. Being what he is he could not act otherwise, although he may live in a community many years doing nothing to offend public sense of justice. But it is at your own risk if you relax vigilance over him. Does not everything prove that where there is a natural lack of conscience, the occasion for the

development of that lack is sure, sooner or later, to appear? When E., then, looks lightly upon temptations, or, in observing men and things accepts ugly facts without tracing out causes, it may be safely inferred that he pursues the same method towards himself. Whatever disaster happens, say in his business, in his profession, or in his family, he will never be able to see fault or mismanagement on his own part. While wincing under material losses, he finds ample excuses for himself in the words "bad luck," or "state of the country," or somebody else's blunder. Even after being fairly convicted, similar characteristics appear. True, he is ready enough to make promises of amendment: but, knowing him to be morally weak, by what right can you expect him to keep those promises, or to show penitence when they are broken? If you do so expect, you overrate the man.

Moral force is something quite distinct from reason, from observation. E. is deemed a clear-headed, sound-hearted man; he talks well upon finance, upon political affairs, upon social and domestic duties. He is made manager of institutions, treasurer of banks, director of public interests. And in one sense he is well fitted for these trusts,—he is practical, discerning, prompt. In another sense—one the world does not notice—he is eminently unfitted. Having a low moral standard, he has no appreciation of the fine springs within springs which control administration. The day comes then when E. falls into financial difficulties. He discusses the subject freely, acknowledges his obligations, promises to try and bring order out of chaos. But if, after months or years of this trying, no results are perceptible, we may well doubt the

moral ability. Just as the tippler sees the weakness, folly, ruin, of the habit; and yet—continues tipping; so E. knows where indolence, or pleasure, or speculation will lead him, and yet—continues yielding to its seductions. Remonstrated with, he becomes indignant:

“What would you have me do? I see it all, am suffering from my mistakes, and mean to correct them! What more do you wish?” But protest, however strong, is not moral force. Until actions answer to promises, E. deserves no trust: whoever gives it upon lower conditions overrates him and must accept the consequences,

Our affections, too, often lead us into overrating people. We like to be liked: so, when here and there one among the crowd turns aside expressly to testify his interest in us and our affairs, we are not insensible to the pleasant flattery. Ourselves is, possibly, wholly unimportant to the world at large, but to us Ourselves is a personage we vastly enjoy seeing appreciated.

Here are two young girls—friends—as they are called.

L. is thoughtful, conscientious, reserved in manner, shy in making any demonstration, especially so towards those she most admires. She does not usually attract attention, is more respected than loved, although by no means insensible to affection when tendered.

M. is the one who tenders it. Gaiety of disposition, fondness for dress, delight in comfort and outward show, enjoyment of the world as it is—these are M.’s characteristics. For some reason she takes a fancy

to L., voluntarily professes fond attachment. Some people call M. frivolous, but L. stoutly defends her adherent, excusing her levities, humoring her fancies. But this sort of compact cannot last. Earnestness and Gaiety may pass many pleasant hours together without becoming confidential. Gaiety cannot understand her companion, while Earnestness must lower her thoughts to meet those of the other.

L., then, in return for affection, has persistently overrated M.: while the latter, owing to the condescension of her friend, has always underrated her.

Two other young women cherish friendship one for the other. H., usually cold and reticent, manifests for F. admiration so ardent and so plainly expectant of reciprocity that the position becomes somewhat peculiar. For, however grateful F. feels, however desirous of making sufficient acknowledgment, she cannot return the sentiment in the same degree. But F. belongs to the overrating sect. Her own nature being deep and enthusiastic, she imagines there must be a similar latent force in her young friend, a force which time and patience can develop. Under this conviction she bends herself to a sacrifice of her own leisure in behalf of a more frequent interchange of visits and letters. Year after year passes, however, only to show that these two souls can never assimilate, that on one side, at least, the estrangement is more marked than ever. Good, amiable, wholly worthy of esteem, all this F. knows H. to be. Moreover, she gives her credit for far greater mental abilities than appear on the surface. Upon various occasions she openly maintains that H. is misunderstood by other people, and looks forward hopefully to the time when the intimacy

so eagerly desired shall be consummated. Nevertheless, spite of her overrating, F. cannot but see that the change does not come about. There is a perceptible undercurrent of coldness, a something which, put into words, would have been:

We both mean well, and feel kindly disposed towards each other. But why take such pains to meet and spend hours together, when both are well aware that there is no satisfaction?

At last the day of awakening comes. A chance sojourn under the same roof solves what to one party, at least, had long been an uncomfortable problem. The "much" which she persuaded herself lay dormant in the other dwindles away to its natural proportions. After that there is no farther attempt at welding Like and Unlike. Kindly feeling remains, but—as any save an overrating person would have seen at the outset—their ways in life are and ever must be widely different.

"Estimez, comme moi, les hommes ce qu'ils valent, et il ne vous manquera rien pour être heureuse." So D'Alembert wrote to a friend who found it hard to adjust her own keen wit and daring will to the dulness and platitudes of ordinary people.

Very good advice, M. D'Alembert,—but how to do this thing, how learn to estimate people fairly?

None of us want to be unjust towards others, nor do we want to be overridden by them. Cool judgment is said to be one of the most effective weapons for social encounters. Granted readily that it is, yet most of us soon learn that our natural desires, our interests and our education are prone to tamper with judgment and weaken its decisions. To estimate our



neighbors at their just value we must go through a long preparatory course of self-study. Noting carefully the complications we find within, and the difficulty of moulding them to the will, we come gradually to a partial understanding of our neighbors.

Character has key-notes which often very unexpectedly fall upon our ears and explain mysteries of conduct. In one person it is pride, in another ambition, in another self-distrust, or excess of feeling. Having heard the key-note, we may easily find our way to the inner nature. Allowing for possible modifications, we have no right to expect from a character more than that key-note indicates.

Such an estimation makes plain to us the folly of thinking that our neighbors must see and feel as we do; of taking to heart and brooding over words which tell distinctly on what diverse planes we stand; of dreaming that it lies within our power to change ourselves or other people; of believing that we or they are accountable for personal idiosyncrasies; of manifesting impatience when confronted with stupidity; of hurling the poisoned shafts of sarcasm at those who wound our sensibilities.

## V I.

### FASCINATION OF ROVING.

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To whom is travelling a fascination? Surely not to everybody, for I see some around me who might spend their lives in it if they chose, who yet prefer the perpetual sameness of home; and others again who have actually been upon the four quarters of the globe without adding either ideas or experience to their lives. It would seem, then, that it is a relative advantage, hindrance, pain, or pleasure; that it is desirable just as society, solitude, matrimony, celibacy, and similar phases of life are desirable. If it meet our wants, conduce to development, fit us for better things than we are now doing, it is good; if the reverse, it is bad.

A progressive human animal passes through numerous stages of thinking and feeling, stages intelligible to himself if not to others. To be fond of travelling at twenty does not imply indefinite continuance of that fondness. Healthy growth, indeed, would necessitate a decrease in roving propensities with the approach of middle-age. Youth is only one epoch,—why attempt to prolong it beyond its due limit? Life is not so long that we can afford to merge one period into another: one by one they bring special tasks, pleas-

ures, pains,—the results of these to be duly assimilated. When this does not occur, life is more than a failure—it is a disaster. Youth passes so swiftly and silently that the passage is realized only when the next era is entered upon.

At middle-age travelling is often an obstacle to development. A man with large financial interests at stake does not willingly leave his post to be filled by a subordinate.

A woman holding the sovereignty of a home, conscientiously shrinks from the risks and losses her absence may entail.

The artist glowing with a conception he wishes to embody in form and color, knows that outward distractions are the bane of excellence. Patient brooding and unremitting labor,—these, added to genius, are conditions of the immortal picture or statue.

The inventor who feels within the movement of a new creation, desires only repose: he avoids every hindrance suggested by change of scene or thought until his problem of mechanism is solved.

The woman who has received the gift of song which promises future glory seeks no diversion from daily routine. Schools and teachers are merely torches to show her the way to distinction; whether she follow depends upon her courage, her self-reliance, her devotion, her entire renunciation of ease and pleasure during years of preparation.

To the man of letters, roving is as serious a break in his life-work as sickness, accident, or similar misfortune. Not that he is wanting in a keen appreciation of the agreeable possibilities accruing from novel sights and sounds. But, having pledged his honor to

Literature, he deems it only chivalrous to eschew every seduction which may in the least degree impair the fervor of devotion. If his brain have material enough for a projected work, he sees the folly of accumulating fresh thoughts, fancies, and impressions before the old are utilized. His mind, already crowded with questions to be pondered, resents the intrusion of new ones; they interfere provokingly with trains of thought already started. A mass of undigested travelling is the precursor of sloth and purposeless dreaming.

The thinker who has seen various foreign lands has experienced so great a mental excitement that years must elapse before the results can be systematized. In the interval, then, he travels merely for facts wherewith to illustrate statements, for experience which shall verify theories: he submits to an unpleasant ordeal for the sake of ultimate gain. If he require rest, travelling may act as a powerful restorative; but it must not be the orthodox kind. This means a party,—often of incongruous people; much luggage to watch over and bear in mind; daily financiering; migration from one large hotel to another, and incessant activity.

Radical travelling, on the contrary, means the free personal choice of a companion; liberty to select time and place; the care of only so trifling an amount of clothing as conduces to comfort; the voluntary disposal of days into sight-seeing, strolling, and idling.

Yet, if middle-aged people avow dislike to travelling, thoughtless minds impute it to degeneracy of spirit, selfish love of ease. Such minds, being always in a state of childhood, cannot realize that others are maturing; that in this case people at thirty cannot possibly be the same as at twenty. They are less

easily diverted, less affable with strangers, less inclined to give themselves up to the fancy of the hour. Yet they are not on this account incapacitated for travelling; under certain conditions they can, indeed, extract from it far more than in youth.

If we consider travelling as a branch of education, it is easy to see who would derive both great pleasure and great profit from it. Let two men start upon the same journey—say a year in Europe—we may pretty nearly tell what they will bring back, whether in brain or in trunk, by observing the character they leave home with.

Travelling, to men and women of average ability, gives special benefits, of a quality to be had in no other way.

That these benefits are reaped and stored away in very different modes, or, that after reaping they may be wantonly wasted, need not be demonstrated. Character undergoes no intrinsic change because of travel. Intellect, heart, tastes,—these are the same whether at home or abroad.

Choosing our travelling companion, then, we are quite safe in relying upon character as we know it at home. Whoever is morose or churlish at his own fireside will assuredly not lose this attribute when travelling. So with reticence, frankness, abruptness, suavity,—they are the same in one place as in another, only that travelling gives them to us more distinctly drawn, more highly colored. Travelling exaggerates character. The man whose personality would be disagreeable to us at home would be utterly intolerable in travelling. The woman who at home is absorbed

in the search for personal ease would in travelling die daily of discomfort.

In what position in life, it might be asked, are we not cheered or depressed by our companions? But in travelling the contact is necessarily closer. At home various occupations enable us to leave one another, at least, during some hours of the day. But when travelling this is rarely possible. We must hear the same sounds, see the same sights, suffer from the same inconveniences, deal with the same people.

Nevertheless, it may safely be asserted that if travelling is to be deferred until we find companions who meet our highest needs, we shall for the most part live through life without it. Philosophy tells us, then, to take the best companion within our reach, and fill up deficiencies with other resources.

Preparation for travelling,—what different pictures this phrase brings up to mind! To the very young or to the very thoughtless, Preparation—for anything,—is a pleasurable excitement. It means relief from ordinary pursuits, and anticipation of extraordinary ones. It gives scope to the imagination, to that delightful play of thought, sentiment, and possibility which many travellers pronounce the best part of travelling. There are yet other people to whom Preparation for travelling is a veritable godsend,—those without any fixed occupation or without designs of any kind. They undergo that peculiar and always interesting transformation which results from the thing called Incentive. They are suddenly stirred by a something hitherto unknown in their somewhat vacant lives,—a motive, a purpose. They are going

abroad—no matter whether for a three months' tour or for a year—they must get ready. New activity takes possession of their steps, new light enters their eyes, new accents vibrate in their voice, new thoughts penetrate their minds, new feelings generate in their hearts. Temporarily, they are re-created people, and, seeing them thus, we ask:

With some congenial occupation—one suited to ability and temperament—would not those same people be always thus energetic, thus vitalized? They like the excitement of preparation, they say, in response to remarks upon their unwonted briskness or happy bearing. It is not the amount that they purchase or prepare, it is the tangible interest put into their life which effects rejuvenation. Perhaps, of all the benefits of travel, this, to such characters, is the greatest. For the first time in their lives—this in many cases—they are drawn out of inanity.

The people thus favorably affected by preparation for travelling are those who look beyond themselves for entertainment. They think home-life stupidly monotonous, but are wholly unaware of the reason—one which their best friends would hardly care to whisper—the stupid monotony of *themselves*. No thoughts, no sentiments, no purposes, no perceptions of any kind—without these, how in the name of wonder could home-life be anything but burdensome!

Preparation for travelling, however, opens a new and pleasing vista; gives, moreover, so sharp a realization of ignorance that knowledge, even if superficial, becomes a requisite of self-respect. Geography, History, Art—these hitherto mere dry terms synonymous with ennui now assume new colors, increased weight.

Whether going abroad or going to travel in their own country, they must at least know a few facts, gather in a few stores from other people's observations and statements.

To another kind of people—men and women whose daily lives are filled in with definite aims and earnest endeavors—such preparation is a severe castigation to comfort. The bare thought of leaving home, with its familiar haunts and thronging associations; the tearing up of daily habits, interesting pursuits, and pleasurable recreations, causes a sensation of absolute pain: they suffer acute pangs of nostalgia in advance. To travel agreeably necessitates a prior equipment; and this means a giving up of the present to an untried future. While thus occupied, whether weeks or days only, everything best liked—positive or passive—must be abandoned.

To a woman of this class I believe nothing in the list of arrangements gives more annoyance than the packing of trunks. Suppose yourself one of those women in an average room with an average quantity of women's "things" in it. In addition, the contents of sundry closets and drawers outside the room must be looked over and culled from. Travelling means experiencing many varieties of climate, of occasions without the privilege of running to one of these closets or drawers for the special clothing needed. And now which and how many of these "things" to take? which and how many to leave? Here they are spread before the eye,—“things” hanging, “things” lying on shelves, “things” folded, “things” put away in obscure corners, perhaps marked, perhaps not marked. To make a selection—say for a six months' tour—is in sound an



easy enough affair. To do it in reality is both troublesome to do and unsatisfactory when done. Questions arise with every article of clothing touched :

Shall I need this? Is it worth while to take that? Will it be warm or cold, or both? Shall this plain, substantial garment, or this prettier, more graceful one, be chosen? For a rainy day, the first, of course; for a fine day, the second, of course. What remains but to take the two? Finally, after selecting only what seems absolutely indispensable to combined comfort and appearance, the putting into the trunk begins. How is this? You have disposed of only a handful of the things selected, and, lo, no more will go in—the trunk is full!

Dear me—is this packing? you mutter to yourself. If so, I do not like it,—would fain run away from it. What is to be done? There is no time to lose; some of the things chosen—nay, a great many of them—must be left behind. So you begin, as you fancy, very systematically. A few of these, a few of those—clothing, books, portfolios, boxes, nick-nacks—altogether a curious mass of miscellaneous objects—are stored away in the recesses of that trunk. Later, during those months of travel there comes to mind many a vexatious thought concerning that same trunk and its contents. Indeed, it is never once opened that you do not miss some very important article, and wish yourself rid of most of those found there waiting for use. To your daily annoyance you find that most of the “things” so carefully selected are precisely those which should have been left behind. With keen regret you refer but too often, in imagination, to a particular corner at home where just the article

needed for comfort or elegance is at this moment lying unused. However—such is the invariable reflection—next time you travel you will know exactly what to take; packing, like everything else, is to be learned.

But, in truth, I believe this sort of woman never does learn: she might make a dozen or a hundred journeys without becoming one whit more skilled in the art of packing. Yet, perhaps her personal friends may think none the worse of her for that. Indeed, have not some of us noticed that the most precise and thoroughgoing of women, one able to pack nicely not only one trunk but a dozen of them, is by no means the most attractive of womankind?

Preparation—sensible or otherwise—goes on with this unpractical woman in an exciting, vexing way up to the eleventh hour. Even then she is not ready, but leaves home with the uneasy conviction that things there are in sad confusion, and that after all her cogitation and toil her most needed “things” have been omitted. Poor woman! Young or old, she ought to have somebody to look after her—at all times—but especially when packing her trunk.

Experiences! Who that has been a rover could not furnish enough for one or more volumes? Most of them, it is true, are in a state of chaos—like the lives of most people—but a vast number find their way into descriptions of foreign lands, into letters, and into private journals. From these sources who among us cannot learn all we wish about the most remote countries and people! At certain epochs of mental life books of travel possess an irresistible fascination.

We believe everything that every author tells us, and thus often grow into a somewhat contradictory knowledge of facts and fancies. Perhaps it is a good plan to read all the books we can find upon one special country or place before giving ourselves credit for any information whatsoever. The mental status of the traveller, in addition to his temper, his moods, and his facilities for seeing or not seeing, knowing or not knowing,—these must decide how much reliance is to be placed in him.

Diaries kept on the spot are to me the most satisfactory of travel-records. Not that I should want to read every traveller's diary. The laws of comfort forbid! But with confidence in the traveller as man or woman—confidence in judgment, perception, and culture—I gain thus a more vital knowledge of foreign lands and people than from any other source. Every day and every hour brings its own special events, incidents, observations, and the history of a single week thus noted often gives a clearer idea of a new place than the most elaborate treatise,—gives it, too, in a manner far less tedious.

Reading a cleverly-written diary of travels, we are at once brought into close relations with the traveller's personality. In a few pages we discover whether or not there is any attraction for us; if not, there need be no waste through the attempt to force an interest. But, if we find head and heart enlisted in that personality, we require no farther incentive for continuing research. We give ourselves up to the pleasing influence as the next best thing to travelling itself. Not having a good gift in our possession, it is some gratification to hear it vividly described. Alas that

so many mortals are forced to take much of life's joy by proxy!

Roving desires grow from nourishment found in vivid descriptions of places and people. Never having heard of a foreign land, we should never know the restlessness caused by knowledge of its beauty or marvels. Even Imagination can build castles only upon a basis of Fact—a something known or felt.

Experiences of roving,—who among us is willing to take them at hearsay, upon trust? However strong your faith or interest in a printed narrative, you crave a test, a seeing and handling of the things there set forth. In youth, you read and dream of foreign lands until the realization of your conceptions becomes a passionate craving. You know more of the world beyond your range of vision than of the actual world that greets your daily waking. You long to see novel sights, to hear strange sounds, to have keen sensations. What you have seen portrayed in prose, in poetry, or on canvas you would fain know personally, intimately.

Your faculties expand with rapturous anticipation at the bare thought of seeing the World—that fascinating mystery enshrining an endless variety of beautiful scenes and charming people. In imagination you never have enough, because you can see no limit to your own active participation in the delightful whirl.

Thus ripe for gratification of desire, you naturally seize the first opportunity offered. Where you go, how you go, what you see, under what conditions,—of how slight import are these to youthful glow! You are living in the delights of roving—what more do you ask? Even if too young to appreciate all you see

and hear, you yet absorb into consciousness much that is to be comprehended only later in life.

Nature, Art, Humanity—these, as exemplified in different nations, make impressions never to be effaced. Roving without care, without anxiety; reason and feeling are in turn roused to activity; you imbibe an atmosphere of development which is to influence all future years.

Roving on land—whether by railroad, by stage, by carriage, on horseback, on foot—furnishes a series of adventures which needs only an appreciative mind to enjoy, susceptibility to suffer from, and good sense to grow wise upon.

Roving—like life everywhere—is made up of digressions. You start under auspices which promise golden results—golden as to experiences, I mean, not as to finding the precious metal. You have health, means, and a party—which, although not perhaps perfect as to material, is yet the best within choice at the eventful epoch of decision. And still, with all your caution and precaution, with every conceivable kind of advice and arrangement, there occurs many an unrecorded chapter of incidents sharply illustrative of the crooked, fantastic way in which things often work.

Who could foresee the embarrassment or ludicrous situation ensuing now from a miscarried letter, now from a carelessly-worded telegram, now from downright stupidity on your own or somebody else's part! Nor will the remembrance of these and certainty as to their origin insure you against future mishaps.

Now and then occurs one of those amazing combi-

nations of defective judgment, change of plan, mistake, and vexation, which no preconcerted device ever could have brought about. The traveller of Bohemian tendencies fully enjoys the humor of the thing; and to see others around him take it altogether au sérieux, bringing out of it a superfluity of talking, planning, and suggesting, only adds to its farcical aspect. The traveller of practical turn is sure to be sorely tried over these petty complications.

"How easily it might have been avoided if we had only acted differently!" So it might, my sententious friend; and you may say the same of every imbroglio, domestic or foreign. In short, no matter how fairly we start, there must be many twists and turns, various annoyances endured, countless contingencies risked, before we can report ourselves safely arrived at a given point.

Yet who cannot see that in these very digressions lie often dearly-cherished compensations! A thrilling event, a thought-stirring book, a life-long friend,—either of these may ensue from the most inauspicious journey ever forced upon us.

Travelling gives a power of adaptation which enables us to yield to the disagreeable exactions of life with greater ease than if we knew only the routine of home. Routine is easy to live by. Knowing the calls likely to be made upon us from hour to hour, we hold in reserve, as it were, the requisite amount of patience and self-control. The being prepared for an emergency helps to meet it bravely. But, in travelling, the incessant change of scene and tone of thought takes character by surprise. The weather, our own ignorance or neglect, others' stupidity, detentions,

accidents,—any of these may circumvent the most carefully-laid plans. And whatever our degree of discomfiture, we are forced back upon resignation as the surest means of avoiding worse consequences.

Visiting vast cities in any part of the world, we are struck with the universal tendency of mankind to associate for purposes of commerce, of art, of mechanism, of religion in all its varied forms. And whatever the national or local differences, human characteristics prove everywhere identical—the same interests, the same loves and hates, the same virtues and vices, the same aspirations and degradations. Dwelling amid masses of humanity, we feel the human part of us stirred by earnest wishes and warm sympathy. It is a satisfaction to learn through observation and language that the heart of humanity is the same in one place as in another. We marvel over it even then, but the marvel gradually grows into a tranquillizing knowledge, which prepares the way for that most philosophical of principles—Cosmopolitism.

A traveller who has once acquired this finds himself able to extract something good out of every place, out of every possible event or position. When in cities, he visits churches, picture-galleries, museums, libraries, parks, and gardens. He sees the inhabitants in public, sees them in private; knows something of their work, their play, their ambitions,—perhaps of their follies. Interested in all that is spread before him, he lingers long and leaves reluctantly. Yet, going as he must after a more or less limited sojourn, he carries with him facts, fancies, and impressions which ever after hold distinctive places in memory. Seeking a large

city for amusement only, is pitiful—for either men or women—and usually a failure as regards the end sought. But, seeking it for purposes of research, of becoming familiar with modes of education, government, social and industrial life, is an object at once noble and enlightening. Roving from town to town and from village to village is by no means productive of comfort, nor always of novelty or diversion; yet, in no other way can we so well find out precisely how other nations live, think, act. There is a kind of life which never finds its way into books, but manifests itself in house and garden, in dress, manner, and countenance.

Yet, after weeks or months of the excitements of city life, there comes over us a fatigue from which the most entertaining of sights cannot rally us. We are sated with sight-seeing, weary of walking and standing, of thinking and feeling. We crave a rest in anything, from anything that is far removed from masses of buildings and crowds of people.

Mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers, forests—which of these to choose?

Mountain-Roving,—what attractions does this offer? To many people, none at all. They are depressed in spirits by the first sight of mountains, and continue so until removed from their presence. They profess dislike for either riding or walking, have no desire to go over either a beaten track or an unexplored one. Upon the whole, their sole conception of pleasure from mountain scenery is a view from a hotel-window or porch, or from a comfortable carriage. “Very fine indeed!” “Really superb!” “How high is it? Dear me, do people walk over those dreadful places!” With



such lip-admiration as this, with such flippant wonder, they feel that they have amply satisfied the claims of celebrated spots. Having seen them without exertion of muscle, without mental strain, without emotional drain, they return home well content to be able to say, "We have been there!" Every one has the right, not only to travel, but to do it in his own way and utter his own impressions. If, then, those who do not care for mountain-roving will frankly say so, we respect them for their honesty, but nevertheless do not desire to meet them. When we ourselves are in a glow of enthusiasm, it is not pleasant to have a cold stream of apathy abruptly poured upon us.

But, to some other people, mountain-roving is the very acme of roving-delights. Merely to see mountains in the distance excites keen longings, and when on the spot they pass through a series of happy days, impossible even to trace with the pen. They drink in eagerly all the beauties and wonders of the new creation about them,—but carry away only memory-pictures, only soul-impressions. Once, during an eventful period of roving privileges, I attempted to keep a journal. It went on very well—as far as a daily jotting down of dry facts might be called "well"—until we entered Switzerland by the Splügen Pass. From that moment my hand was paralyzed,—description seemed sheer desecration.

To say "I like the mountains" implies neither special merit nor special culture, but simply a mountaineer-temperament. The Why, the How, the Effect,—these may well be left untouched, left to the imagination of other innate mountaineers, the only ones, of course, who can sympathize with the liking.

Where else is there that joyous sense of freedom which enables the mind to rise lightly and easily out of its usual prison-house—Responsibility!

Roving over these regions on foot—the sole mode of knowing them thoroughly, intimately—you seem transported to another planet, one better worth living on than any hitherto imagined. The air alone is charged with properties which make breathing appear a wholly new process, one meaning keener perceptions, better thoughts, and finer sentiments. The sky takes aspects which make concentration upon them seem the all-sufficient end of roving. As for the mountain-forms themselves, now rooted in gigantic masses, now shooting up into countless pinnacles, now spreading over a seeming continent in waves of verdure, rock, or snow, with awe-inspiring glaciers streaking their sides,—they stir you with thoughts and emotions which baffle analysis, defy portrayal.

Lake-scenery! Sojourning amid those peaceful haunts, how delicious your reveries! Without any defined aim you are continually lured to the water's edge. The transparency speaks to you in mystic tones; the rippling soothes you with half-whispered promises; the picturesque islands kindle your imagination with desire for exploration of their charms. The haziness of distant hills transports you away from the present to halcyon days when those dim outlines and those delicate shades of color may be approached and enjoyed. To linger here, noting with ever-fresh delight the changes incident to earth, atmosphere, and sky—with this you are so content that you would fain linger forever.

Sunrise! This I fear you do not often see,—only at rare intervals, perhaps, a fragment of one from your window, or a larger portion from a stage-coach or a steamer-deck or a car-window. In justice let it be said, however, that when you do see even this much of sunrise, you are enchanted with its beauty, and inwardly vow you will see many more—entire ones—before you die. But sunset—this, here by the lake, you see daily, with satisfaction more or less complete according to your companionship, the weather, and your mood. One evening it is memorable because of a previous two days' storm that put you into close confinement. The sun has just disappeared, and there is a twilight of that brightness which makes us loath to believe that darkness is so soon to overshadow all now beheld. How softened and purified the sky appears after the preceding turbulence, almost as if the whole were made anew! And of the entire scene, the thing that gives you most delight is a feathery rosy-purple cloud which looks like a wanderer from some fairy-realm. Another evening it is a vast expanse of clear blue, gradually growing paler towards the horizon, and melting into a faint orange. And there, just above that far, far-off horizon, are the daintiest cloud-structures ever conceived of, floating embodiments of so ravishing a beauty, that gazing upon it causes a sensation of pain. Perhaps there are rash moments when you are tempted to make a pen-sketch of phases which give you rare pleasure; but you are quickly made to feel it a sad waste of enjoyment. No: sunset, moonlight, starlight—these, while fully and gladly absorbed into your being, refuse to be reproduced in visible form.

For a lengthened stay near a lake, I would choose one surrounded by hills rather than mountains. For if by the latter, it seems imbedded, sunk below our familiar earth's level. The dark hues of the water, its peculiarly deep aspect, its cold, clear reflection of the shores,—these, added to the continual straining of imagination to see beyond the mountain-walls, excite a sensation of mingled restraint and uneasiness. Save during a brief space in mid-day, when the shade is gratefully welcomed, we feel as if imprisoned, and long for more open, more extended views.

Islands—these, whether of inland seas, whether lying close to the coast, or whether resting in mid-ocean far removed from the busy hum of great centres of civilization—offer their own special fascination to the rover. “Islands” we say? Yet, what are islands save parts of continents—either of those now existing, or of those once submerged—in themselves miniature repetitions of the parent-earth from which they have been in some rude or unexplained mode sundered? Visiting islands where the square miles are reckoned by the hundreds or thousands, we lose all sense of island. But when we go to those of diminutive proportions, where drives, rides, or walks can show us the entire surface in a few hours, we receive quite another and that the true island experience. There is then a sensation of novelty akin to that of ocean-travel. We are on the water, it is all around us, under us,—we imagine ourselves floating or resting on it, exposed to its vicissitudes and risks. There is, too, a vague sense of insecurity, a somewhat unpleasant consciousness of limitation and depend-

ence, a feeling of isolation from the great activities and interests of the rest of the world.

I should never want to live upon a small island, and have often wondered how any one could choose to do so. Probably no one does so choose. Who, even among so-called favored mortals, has choice of residence in his hands? Waking to conscious life, we, all of us, find ourselves—somewhere: and whether it be in frigid or temperate or tropical clime, on extensive continent or tiny islet, we must fain be—for the most part we are—content.

Yet islands are charming places to visit. They offer a sort of compact, concentrated life peculiarly restful to one coming from the mainland. We find less traffic, less travelling, fewer strange people and new objects to become familiar with. We seem at last to have reached a spot where there is no hurry, no eagerness, no competition. Whether it be in mid-ocean, or near the coast, or in the bosom of a lake, its atmosphere is tranquillizing. I can imagine a dreamer possessed with a desire to embody his dreams in verse or prose, seeking a picturesque island and there finding the most favorable conditions for his pursuit. There, with very slight exertion, he finds that abstraction from busy, practical doing which seems anywhere on a continent inseparable from even an obscure private life. There he has a continually-changing series of sky-pictures, of water-life, of atmospheric effects, of rock-structure, of vegetation,—more than enough for inspiration, added to that rare but blessed boon called leisure. Elsewhere—anywhere almost amid life's busy scenes—is not inspiration but too often a source of disquiet, of self-reproach?

Sauntering along a rock-bound island-coast,—what need for more than gazing, listening, absorbing! Does it matter when? where? What if there is nothing left for description, nothing by which once-enjoyed scenes can be reproduced for other eyes,—nothing save shadowy impressions, very forcible, very real at the time of making, but not to be transplanted! We call up this or that phase of such roving as we would a particular person or picture once known or seen.

Fancy yourself passing a summer vacation on one of the most beautiful islands in the Atlantic. One very sultry day at noon you find yourself walking away from the ocean towards the adjacent village. But, the exertion is too much in that dead-heated calm of the atmosphere,—suddenly, changing your course, you reach the ocean's brink. What a contrast! It is like entering a deliciously cool grotto after exposure to the blazing sun of the plains. The tide is high, and there is a fog entirely shutting out the sea, except two or three lazy breakers some feet below. On your right—the land side—the sun is shining faintly. On your left, fog, sky, and ocean are interblended, giving a fairy-like aspect to the whole. Just before you the cliffs and sundry frame cottages are dimly outlined. It is a scene of enchantment in mid-day, and one to which you willingly yield.

The fog is not wet, briny, clammy fog, such as is found elsewhere. It is enchanted fog. It is of fine, soft consistency, cooled precisely to the right temperature to produce a half-stimulating, half-soothing effect upon the senses. It throws you into a dreaminess so pleasant that you would fain prolong it indefinitely,—but now the fog begins to lift a little, disclosing bits

of sky, avenues of water, the substantial rocks and earth. You stroll on beyond the few scattered cottages and bend your steps down a steep place to a ledge of rocks close to the water's edge, where you mean to sit and muse. Looking straight before you in descending, you notice a man standing below on a rock, perhaps twenty yards off. You take him to be a fisherman and too intent upon his work to notice you. Next you hear a shout somewhere near, and stand half doubting, half hesitating, whether to proceed. Presently you see a man plunging into the water just near the supposed fisherman.

You turn round abruptly and walk off half swearing—in a womanly way—at the effrontery of bathing here at noon when women and children are walking by. You find another place, and sit down on the turf. The ocean is of a dull, changeable, blue-green hue, although close to the shore are spots of vivid green caused by the patches of grass underneath. What variety of color in the rocks just below! Dark-gray, light-gray, white, russet-brown, the last predominating. What produces the colors you cannot distinctly see, except the brown from sea-weed matted or trailed over.

Restless, surging, eddying, incessantly approaching and receding, the sound just now is that of a distant waterfall. It is as if you heard without seeing, and the hearing gives forth a luxurious coolness.

Another day you are taking your favorite ramble early in the afternoon. You have been unpleasantly warned, by somebody in authority at your lodgings, not to "go far;" so, grumbling a little at the interdiction which limits you even in holidays, you go as far

as you dare, and then seat yourself on some rocks overlooking a striking ledge about twenty feet below. The distant ocean view to-day is not attractive. The horizon on every side is opaque, grayish-white: overhead the sky is light blue, with here and there dashes of white cloud. The ocean is unusually quiet, and in color of that changeable blue-white sheen which dazzles the eye so unpleasantly. As a whole—a body, an entity, a mass—it has that peculiar stationary appearance which is oppressive. Impossible, you mutter inwardly, that what you now see in such absolute repose could ever be wild, stormy, dangerous! You do not like to look at it,—it has an uncanny, treacherous aspect, like a smooth, calm face behind which lurks a vicious temper.

You turn away from the whole, and with a sense of relief take in near views. Here, close to the shore, at your very feet, there is life enough in the water. What you just now called “a ledge” is, more clearly speaking, a group of large rocks dropped at random apparently. They form a little cove, a sort of enclosure belonging to, yet apart from, the ocean itself. In so small a space you never before have seen water so full of vitality. Perhaps it is the contrast between this fraction of the element and the lethargy of the main body of it. The sun shines upon this little cove with almost painful brilliancy. You see pebbles of every size and hue, while the rocks are alternately exposed and submerged by the ebbing and flowing waves. The wind blows from the west and pretty strong, but it has no perceptible effect upon the whole mass of water. Only here in this one spot is there this incessant, playful, charming ripple. You want



to be down there in it, stepping with bare feet from rock to rock, laving hands and face in its clear crystal beauty. The sea-weed and pebbles are transfigured by sunshine into a bewitching power, which lures you down to partake of the general joy.

Another day you walk along dreamily until a spot strikes your fancy, then sit down, and grow dreamier still. It happens to be near a stately mansion standing amid extensive grounds. But here on the edge of the bluff, seated on the soft green turf, facing the ocean, you forget the stately pile behind you. You look down upon huge masses of rock hurled from—Where? thrown up by—What? Rent asunder, cracked, splintered, they seem memorials of another era—one long ago lived—to have nothing in common with earthly interests of to-day. You pore over their seams, search into their clefts, shudder over their contortions as if intensity of gazing must finally extract their origin. The ocean to-day is neither very turbulent nor very tranquil. The surf comes in lazily, but steadily. It swells, gurgles, bubbles, tosses, making—so in your present mood it seems—the saddest, sweetest music that ever fell upon your ears. You could stay here hours, days, weeks—indefinite time—and never weary.

The Ocean-Voice—as heard on this island—how infinite the variety in its monotonies! It rises, swells, dies away,—then sweeps over wonderful chords of tone, to which you listen with closed eyes and reverent eagerness. Never was a concert more enjoyed than this! Then you look while listening. What incessant rippling, glimmering, surging, dashing! Just now, after a lull of the waves, as if to gather fresh force,

a heavy surf comes in. Nearing the low mass of rocks at your feet, it takes a sudden leap—as if thrilled with joy, intoxicated with its own vitality—and dashes pell-mell over the rugged surface.

Another time, late in the afternoon, you are on a wild, rugged Point, a weird pile of stupendous rock belonging to a villa close by. But the house is so far back, it seems by comparison so trivial an affair of wood,—one so easily uplifted and blown away by any chance gale,—that you scarcely notice it. It is a mere baby-house beside those rocks. In certain moods, this Point is your favorite one. Its bluntness and wildness are a relief to the wearisome platitudes of other scenes not far removed by time or space: there is a strength in it which makes you despise those scenes, and sends an appeal to the better self which longs to escape from such effeminacy. Seated here gazing into space—of ocean, sky, ether—you are transported out of littleness into greatness. In these moments you are not the conventional woman your appearance would indicate,—you are something better, something nearer the natural woman. You feel that there has been enough contact with the world, enough observation of its human denizens, enough reflection upon their instincts, ways, and deeds. Solitude like this lengthened out into weeks, months—perhaps years—would open to you new powers, new hopes, new possibilities. Can this not be deduced by noting the effect of these few fleeting moments?

The surf is always peculiarly boisterous around this part of the island. You are sitting on a ledge jutting out between two cavern-like openings below, where the waves dash in and out with startling vehemence,

throwing up spray into your very face. You have been here often before, but never saw the waves so varied in their fierce beauty ; it is as if every atom had a new and unwonted energy. Beyond the shore the general aspect of ocean is calm, its color a dull blue ; the sky just overhead is light clear blue, with a faint pinkish tinge bordering the horizon ; there is no sunlight, and the breeze would be too strong and bracing for a delicate frame,—you it suits so well that you cannot breathe in enough of it ; the moon on your left is like a white cloud medallion with one-third cut away,—the whole scene is one you would fain retain in memory for days to come, days far removed from such a spot.

What would you not give if one you are thinking of were here by your side to enjoy this tumult of waters ! Wave, spray, froth,—all are quivering under ceaseless change, under overwhelming force. You are awed by the turbulence and the mystery of motion, by the half sense of danger there on your rock-seat,—danger not positive, but possible. One step either side, one lurch, one second's dizziness,—and you would be precipitated headlong into the seething gulf below ; yet, you sit close, close to the edge, even lean over and look down to catch the full, fearful effect.

What delight in these island-rambles,—especially in hours where there is nobody or nothing waiting for you ! And what other rambles—longer and more distant, by sunset, by night, in storm—you would take, were it not for your woman's fears ! No foundation for them—so reason assures you—yet were you eighty years old it would be the same. They are real fears—real to your imagination—they cripple your

roving propensities, interfere greatly with even an ordinary walk.

Dear old Ocean! Never before—so it seems to you—have you known and loved it so deeply as since on this lovely island! Oddly enough, you prefer sunlight to moonlight. Explicable, apparently, in that you have confessed to woman's fears even by day; but, apart from this, the variety of beauty and melody is greater by sunlight.

Rocks at night look black, gloomy, suggestive of evil. In sunlight they take a thousand hues and forms, each reflective of new wonder. Particles of moss, tangles of sea-weed, a group of insects, a passing cloud, swift-flying zephyrs, the irregular action of the waves,—all these invest them with special charms. No—even with a companion—the right one—sunlight here on the ocean's brink is preferable to moonlight.

Ocean-Travel! Perhaps of all those who may glance at this page, scarcely one may be found who has not had a personal knowledge of its vicissitudes. Whether the whole prove a season of delight or of misery depends, of course, upon all those mysteriously-interwoven facts called health, circumstances, purposes, and education. Yet, from the way in which it affects travellers may be gleaned a pretty sure testimony of their characters.

Put a man of sensitive temperament on a crowded steamboat—if for only twenty-four hours—and instantly he is attacked with that peculiar mingling of physical and mental discomfort called nostalgia. What causes it? Is it the strange forms and faces incessantly passing and repassing, each one appear-

ing, thinking, feeling, doing, according to his own nature? Is it the treacherous-looking water, or the problematical machinery? Is it the general sense of risk which presses upon the mind? Probably, it is not only one, but all of these causes combined; mainly, however, this mass of people of all nationalities and conditions. Not one of them, perhaps, has ever before been seen,—yet in other places how many other thousands! It induces a singular sense of loneliness to be thrown thus suddenly into a living throng. Unconsciously, almost, he finds himself wondering about them in a desultory way. Who are they? What are they? Where have they been? What are they doing when not here? And to these questionings come only such answers as a partial knowledge of human nature gives. Knowing what a few other people are, he knows what these are, and can learn something from outward signs. Much of past history and present condition can be learned from human faces,—but how much? Could you see your own face for the first time as that of a stranger, what would you read there? The same that you now know of its history, or would you be baffled by its seeming contradictions?

Now put that man on an ocean-steamer, where all the features of the above are found in exaggerated form, and the results are in proportion. Not that he may not wish to go, or have not some conception of the beauty and grandeur about him. No—the keenest appreciation of these often coexists with distasteful conditions.

People who cross and re-cross the ocean—say the Atlantic—speak of it as “nothing,” “an affair of ten

days," "a pleasure-jault," "safer than travelling on land." Some people, doubtless, do grow thus accustomed to it. Others, however, do not. Without making any special ado about it, they get ready, pack, and start; but they never lose the sensation of its being an event of importance. Births, deaths, and sea-voyages may be classed together. We expect them, make preparation, have everything in readiness. Yet, when the moment arrives, the event, in either case, awakens as many conflicting thoughts and emotions as if wholly unexpected.

"There is no danger," we are told: yet, upon leaving harbor for a long ocean voyage a peculiar and not unnatural feeling of awe steals over the mind of even the veteran traveller. Lessened as this feeling is by repetition of the experience, a thoughtful mind never wholly loses it.

Nor would such callousness be desirable. What does it imply when we become insensible to the changes which once powerfully affected us? There is a moral decline as well as a physical one, a wearing out of feeling no less than of nerves and tissues. Those who have looked deepest into life dread the psychological decrease of strength far more than the physical one.

What excitement just before the ship casts anchor! What running to and fro! What talking, laughing, advising, entreating! What gazing upon and scrutinizing of others! And apart from all this, the practical part of the little drama goes on just as it has gone on hundreds of times before this special passage.

People not passengers are notified that they must go ashore. Cheeks grow pale, eyes suffuse, hands are clasped, last looks and last kisses given! Now for

the first time we see who are to be our fellow-passengers. Nearly all are grouped on the upper deck, looking down upon the pier where those just parted from are standing, waiting, watching, and—perhaps unconsciously—praying. The young married woman on that upper deck clings to her husband's arm, trembling a little, weeping a little, hardly knowing why she does either. The unmarried woman stands calm and self-possessed, glancing now and then at the people near or below on the pier. Does she not leave one heart to regret her? Is there no one to bid her farewell or wish her God-speed? Possibly, there is one who feels too acutely to be here at this hour,—possibly, there has been a parting too painful even to think of here in public.

Captain, pilot, officers, crew,—all are in their places. And at this moment, probably, they are the only people who feel perfectly at home.

The ship moves! Slowly, majestically, she leaves her moorings and steams out of the harbor. If it be your first passage, you experience a sensation of mingled pleasure and awe which can never be repeated with the same degree of intensity. It is a newness of life, a something often heard of now realized, a gratification of a perhaps long-cherished wish suddenly confronted with its attendant risks. As the shores recede and one familiar object after another grows dim, you involuntarily feel a deep, longing affection for them. You regret, you speculate, hope, fear. Were it possible, you would even gladly return to those shores, abandon your journey.

The first day out! In all, except the very young,

very happy, or very callous, it induces the most aggravated symptoms of nostalgia. You are in a crowd of strange people; you feel positive physical discomfort from the motion of the ship, from its odors, from the incessant jarring of the machinery. You have a sense of helplessness, a certainty of monotony, and that dull aching of head and heart consequent upon parting. You are conscious of unequivocal misery which extorts deep sighs and fervent wishes that the day were well over.

Within the first hour, two or three of the passengers retire below, and every succeeding hour takes a few more from the ranks. If not ill, you shrink from encountering the untried quarters awaiting you below; you linger on deck, chatting with your party, possibly, but wrapped in such gloomy thoughts that you hardly know yourself. Worst of all is the realization of your separation from ——! How could you—you shudderingly ask yourself—voluntarily put this great gulf between you and your affection! And every hour, every minute of the coming days, is to widen and deepen that distance! You had often imagined the immensity and might of the ocean, but the conception was nothing to this dread reality now encompassing you. Only a few hours—hours which at home speed on all too swiftly—yet it seems many long days since you left the land. If this is crossing the ocean, you have enough—more than enough of it already. A wild wish to turn back, to leave the ship, to touch shore, again takes possession of you. At last, just as the acme of nostalgia is reached, you are overpowered with a drowsiness which sends you down to your state-room.



Happy those who can sleep well on board ship! Willingly we sink into the temporary death which is to bring us a renewed vitality, and through that a more beautiful, more inspiring vista of life. Who thus revived would complain of wind or weather, of dull companions, of monotonous pursuits! Who, upon first awaking out of sound, healthful sleep, does not smile at the dark fancies and dread fears of the previous eve! Even now, on this first morrow of ocean-life there is an amused perception of surroundings as viewed from the "upper berth" where you have just spent the night. You feel as if you were on a shelf in a closet, and marvel at your state of comfort in this odd place. You are not positive even whether your being there at all is not an hallucination, such as people have sometimes upon first awaking out of unusually heavy sleep. Gradually you come to a sense of certainty as to your whereabouts. The first night at sea has passed, and this closet is to be your sleeping-chamber for many nights to come. Glancing round, you note the condensed appearance of things, of sofa, wash-stand, mirror: your clothes even seem somehow to take up much less space than usual,—nay, you yourself seem reduced in size, lying there on that narrow shelf so close to the ceiling.

After all, you muse, how little actual space one mortal needs! Then, you wonder how your roommate, lying on the shelf underneath, fared through the night. She is a stranger to you; you saw her only for a moment the previous evening, long enough to note that she was very stout,—and to regret the fact. Unusual bulk in that closet seems out of place, unreasonable. Now, as you are meditating climbing down and

dressing, you regret it more than you did before, for the startling possibility of contact confronts you. Two women—one very stout—dressing in that place at the same time! Preposterous! So you plan a little before making a move. Peeping over the ledge of your shelf, you find that your companion is still sleeping very quietly (what a mercy she does not snore!), so you conclude this is an interval not to be lost. You rise, and begin the process,—but oh, so carefully, so noiselessly, for fear of the strange pair of eyes so disagreeably close being suddenly opened and aimed at you. Not a pleasing task this first morning toilette in your state-room. Your things are all there, yet they seem equally hard to find and awkward to adjust. Possibly, you are never remarkably quick at this matter,—liable to take relays of day-dreaming, which interfere with getting it done,—but now, when you are particularly anxious to reach the upper stratum of your floating abode, you seem beset by divers hindrances. Finally, it is finished—this first ocean-toilette—and you reach the deck and the fresh air. Remembering your condition of the previous evening, you are almost surprised at your comparative buoyancy this morning. You feel more at home, can at least find your way from your state-room to the saloon and to the deck. You are grateful that the first day is over, and anticipate pleasanter experiences from those to come.

The second day out may, as regards the human economy of life on ship-board, be considered an epitome of the rest.

If the traveller be sea-sick, he is a pitiable victim of the worst of physical ills. Day after day, varied ex-

ternally by more or less sun or rain, cold or heat, wind or calm, brings to the sufferer only augmented suffering. If through persistent coaxing his friends get him up on the deck, each attempt lasts only a few moments. The exertion, the glare, the sight of the water, the drooping tendency of the head, all combine to make him wish himself back in his narrow, but, by comparison, comfortable berth. If spared the dire miseries of sea-sickness, ocean-travellers experience various grades of comfort and discomfort, ease of mind and anxiety. Some there are who would never be recognized by friends ashore, so great is the transformation in appearance, disposition, and manner. The why it is, will hardly be capable of a satisfactory answer. But, the fact is indisputable that many people very lovable on land become very hateful people when on board ship. Rationally viewed, how indeed is it possible for men or women to be the same under all circumstances! Here, for instance, on a large ocean steamer are collected several hundreds of people from all parts of the civilized world. Their being there is semi-voluntary, semi-arbitrary, wholly unavoidable. A hermit loses all the advantages of society: a traveller is compelled to participate in all the disadvantages of society.

These fellow-passengers are forced to see one another daily, hourly, almost minute-ly. They associate tacitly, if not actually. They may be wholly dissimilar in rank, aims, or special qualifications; yet temporarily, they are bound by the strongest of all ties—self-interest—to consider their mutual well-being. The interest or curiosity awakened by such observation is from causes none the less potent because indefinable.

Here on a single ship traversing an ocean may be seen the same characteristics which distinguish a human assemblage in any part of the world. As one of the amusements on ship-board costing the least exertion of mind or body, inspection of fellow-passengers is deservedly popular. Whether at table, in the saloon, on deck, or below in the cabins, we are constantly in close proximity with strangers, whom we involuntarily scan with eye, ear, and intuition. One is bright, buoyant, and attractive; a second is dull and morose; a third is coarse and vulgar, or glum and ill-tempered. Moreover, these various types are for the most part the natural fruit of circumstances, and in that sense wholly irresponsible for their flaws and undeserving of merit for their graces.

People carry their homes and their characters abroad with them more than they think. To note the different groups scattered over the deck on a fine clear day is a never-ending source of interest. Here is a family which attracted your attention the day of sailing. It consists of father, mother, nurse, baby, two little girls, and one boy. From some of their preparations it is to be inferred that they are new to ocean-travelling, for among miscellaneous traps are four hoops and a pair of stilts! Nice playthings, truly, for ship-board! The father is a man of about thirty, tall, gaunt, careworn, mainly, it strikes you, from incessant looking after wife and four troublesome little ones. His countenance plainly expresses this one absorbing thought. The wife and mother is not pleasing to the eye; this not because the face is unsymmetrical, but because it has neither animation nor goodness. And the children—from baby up—partake of both

parents' characteristics. One of the little girls—the oldest—carries a huge doll, larger by far than the baby-sister, and apparently as heavy; for, a few minutes after coming on board she hands it over to her mother, declaring she can hold it no longer. And every time this group is noticed the same characteristics appear. The father—poor man—seems over-anxious to provide for the comfort of all, yet is evidently sorely at a loss for the how. The children, of course, find no use for their hoops, but by way of indemnification manifest insatiable hunger and unquenchable thirst. Their guardians see fit to indulge them without limitation, and the human cubs make no scruple as to annoying their fellow-passengers with débris and spillings. Even in their clothing there is an odd lack of fitness; the little girls wearing ugly yellow-striped frocks, and, although the weather is cold, no outside garment of any kind.

There are other groups, some of less commonplace kinds. There are two odd-looking men to whom you take an instinctive dislike, perhaps because of an aggressive bearing, an offensive independence, an irritating ignoring of their fellow-passengers. Brothers they evidently are, and nearly of the same age and build. Both are of Saxon type, the elder having hair and complexion somewhat darker than the other. Both wear gray slouch hats, generally pulled down over the face, giving what on land would be called a suspicious look. The younger brother has a thick yellow moustache, and hair—what little can be seen under that ugly hat—of the same color. Their ways are altogether different from those of other gentlemen on board. They never seem to notice other people,

never bring seats for ladies, never help them up-stairs or across the deck. They are almost always together, and seem wholly indifferent to the people around them. They appear like men who have endured, and are still enduring, more than the ordinary cares of life, either domestic, political, or pecuniary. They evince a more than average restlessness, which finds a vent in continual marching up and down the deck, side by side, but looking neither to the right nor to the left, and rarely talking to each other. The passengers, generally, regard them with a feeling of half-interest, half-dread; ladies, especially, do not hesitate to express dislike even to their presence.

Strange to say, you become acquainted with these two odd-looking men after being ten or twelve days on the ship. It is just the day before landing, and to your astonishment you find one of them—the younger one—unusually attractive in manner and conversation. His voice is one of the most charming ever heard, and you feel profound regrets at not having known him earlier in the passage.

The irksome publicity of life on ship-board is for some natures even less endurable than physical ills. Imagine yourself crossing the Atlantic on a French steamer, when the question, "Where to go?" is peculiarly difficult to answer. One day especially comes to mind. The ladies' cabin is insufferably close, the saloon no less so and densely crowded besides, the deck nippingly cold. Your state-room—although yours only by half-possession—strikes you as offering better chances for privacy, if not for comfort, than any other corner. It is very far down below, the approach

to it very dark, very forlorn. In it, however, are, by way of furniture, a camp-stool and a narrow red velvet sofa, which may be improvised into either a couch or a table according to need. Not a cheerful place, but—your room-mate being absent—it is at least a quiet, a retired one: it offers a semblance of comfort after the noisy talking, the tramping up and down, the card-playing and general confusion of up-stairs. But even here interruption soon comes. Between your state-room and the one opposite is a passage not more than two feet wide. Into this passage comes a foreigner of slovenly aspect, who, in going into the opposite domicile, honors you with a neighborly foreign stare. This is repeated two or three times as he passes and re-passes, and—although neither very youthful nor very prudish—it makes you uncomfortable. You glance first at the door, then at the port-hole of your room. Impossible to shut the one without being suffocated, or to open the other without being drowned. A curtain is the only alternative. Glowing with this brilliant idea, you call in the active, droll-looking little Frenchman who plays the part of steward in this ship-drama of many acts. You explain your wants. “Anything will do,” you say to him, whereupon Jacques straightway transfers one of the berth-curtains to the doorway. Favors on ship-board require unusual gratitude. But hardly are your thanks expressed when another unlooked-for difficulty puts a damper upon sanguine anticipations of privacy. The motion of the ship is not great, and yet the sea dashes up against the port-hole in a vexatiously disagreeable manner. One second it is light, the next dark,—a process which, incessantly repeated, produces anything but a pleasant

sensation. No hope of remedy for this! Your inventive faculty—at no time very keen—is now utterly at fault. Doing nothing, you cannot possibly stay in that so-called room, so very reluctantly you return to general quarters above, where, if you suffer from publicity and ennui, you at least may counteract them with air and light. Here at least you may do three things,—observe sky and ocean; ruminate upon past, present, and future; study people.

Imagine yet another incident that may serve to illustrate the unexpected situations travelling may appoint for us. Owing to the unbearable closeness of your state-room, you find it impossible to remain there more than an hour at a time, even during the night, without great suffering. What to do? There is no other room to be had, and after remaining up-stairs on deck or in saloon until nearly midnight, What to do? becomes really a serio-comic question. After consultation with your travelling companion, it is decided that you shall retire below towards midnight, but afterwards—when other people are quietly settled in their respective quarters—remount and take a position in the little box-like enclosure up-stairs midships, where two doors offer exit to the upper deck. It is something unutterably dreary to make preparations of extra wraps and head-gear to go up into that public passage for the night. Sometimes during preparation the steward comes to your door with peremptory orders to put out the light, forcing you to fumble about in the dark for the wraps so necessary up in that cold place. Some nights it is very stormy, the ship whirling about wildly, and heavy seas sweeping over the deck within a few rods



of you. Besides this, there are always men walking backwards and forwards, talking and laughing—so near to you it seems with only the thin woodwork between—and others passing your chair on their way down or up. Some of them, you know, drink freely, and you shrink into your wraps with nervous dread as the possibility of intrusion forces itself upon you. The first two or three nights you never close your eyes for fear; but, afterwards fatigue engenders a recklessness which enables you to sleep until four or five in the morning, when at the first sound of deck-scrubbing you gather up your traps and retire to your den.

Odd situation for a young woman, truly! Apparently well, and behaving like other people during the day, yet at midnight trudging up-stairs with shawls and pillows to take a sea-chair in a corner of that forlorn passage-way on deck! Without any doubt, the servants and others who chance to observe your movements think you either insane or so dangerously whimsical that they deem it imprudent to question or cross you, for you are never once accosted or disturbed. After getting used to it, you remember having very pleasant dreams of roving over lovely country regions where the atmosphere was of extraordinary purity,—this last illusion being induced doubtless by the strong ocean-breeze coming in the door and blowing directly in your face.

The Ocean,—that ever-changing, ever-monotonous, and, alas, often treacherous gulf! Hour after hour we gaze into its mysterious face, striving in vain to read those enigmatical characters. To-day so calm and placid, to-morrow so angry, dark, and tumultuous!

Whatever its phase, there is an inexplicable fascination about it, a fixed realization of its ruthless might. We speak of it possibly in familiar tones, call ourselves fearless, trustful—or fatalists—and yet the question, Shall we reach the other side safely? must remain many long days and nights unanswered.

“No danger on the ocean!” Who that has made even a single passage, and a so-called good one, could echo that flippant assertion! Indeed, whoever reflects at all, can scarcely for an instant lose sight of the many risks which can neither be avoided nor run away from. With so much time for revery, mental pictures of calamities that have been and might—ah, so quickly!—again be, rise up, spite of reason, to disturb our peace of mind. On land, where, amid ordinary circumstances, there is rarely perceptible danger, anxious thoughts are easily kept at bay. At sea, where the surroundings are at once contrary to all preconceived ideas of comfort and vividly suggestive of hazard, anxiety becomes but too familiar a sensation.

To hear of the ocean, to read of it,—these to some people are enough. But whoever would drink in its full majesty would never be content without a personal experience. Standing at the stern of the vessel, at night, gazing at that wonderful pathway,—could any description give an adequate idea of the thing itself? Standing there for many moments, thought and feeling are so strained as to produce emotions analogous to pain.

Days of storm on the ocean,—can anything read or imagined equal the sensations of such an experience? You are making a winter passage, and several rough days and nights enable you fully to realize the fact.

Finally comes the "roughest day yet," so that, although usually dubbed a "good sailor," as far as the phrase is applicable to women, you can scarcely keep your feet, and gladly drop down upon the first vacant sofa and keep your head low. Presently your escort comes in and urges you to get your thickest wraps and come on deck; "there is something to see." Reaching the deck, you are surprised to find the sky perfectly clear, but all else signifies a gale of the stiffest kind. Everything is strapped down tight, not a shred loose anywhere, yet the wind howls through the rigging as if bent upon tearing it to pieces. The ship rolls and pitches in helpless misery, and every few seconds heavy seas dash over the bulwarks, washing the decks in energetic but rude style. Two or three successive streams rushing past and under your sea-chair make you think of retreat as the most prudent course; but, the alternative of going below and losing both fresh air and grandeur tempts you to postpone going as long as possible. One lady besides yourself remains, several gentlemen are standing or sitting near, when suddenly a huge wave pours over the wheel-house like a cataract, completely drenching everything and everybody, including yourself. The gentlemen laugh heartily at the general plight, but you and the other lady are rather subdued by the unexpected douche. Hood, veil, shawl, sack, dress,—all are saturated with the ice-cold brine. Comical enough to see those two dripping forms making their way through the crowded saloon to their quarters. After that it seems advisable to remain below. All day long you hear the seas washing the decks, and several times during the afternoon streams of water come pouring through the hatchways

into the saloon. Then before and during dinner what noise and confusion among the crockery! Castors, glasses, dishes, bottles,—all sliding about in every direction, and now and then, as a climax, comes a tremendous prolonged crash, awaking doubts as to a single whole piece being left.

On yet another day of storm there is less diversion and more anxiety. The season is spring; there have been intervening days of comparative quiet, which give increased effect to the present turbulence. Can it be that this is the same ocean, this huge illimitable mass of angry waters! How they toss, surge, and roll, desperately resolved, it would seem, upon engulfing every atom within their reach!

Look at those mammoth waves, how they rise and sweep and break around the ship as she bravely works her way through! Staunch and powerful is the craft, fitted, men say, to cope with wind and wave however tumultuous. Yet, in this hour, as she plunges forward or rolls from side to side, now rising, now sinking, now giving a spasmodic leap, now halting, as if utterly exhausted—what a frail thing she seems! Will she, can she live through it? Again and again this doubt arises, so unequal seems the struggle between her and her opponent. Nature overrules all, you murmur. You believe it: but never before did it flash upon you with so great an emphasis. Human life dependent upon that frail ship! Should any part of that complicated machinery give way; should the strain from the elements be too intense; should any unforeseen contingency cripple her strength,—where should those living souls turn for succor? To the life-boats? Large and safe they once looked. But that was when the

ocean was smooth and placid, wholly unlike the ocean now beheld. Now, were the life boats the sole place of refuge, small indeed would be the chances of rescue! No life-boat could live in so wild a sea as that! One single wave would swamp a hundred of them and leave no sign. When the climax of storm is reached, there is a cessation of jesting and grumbling. Every human being is impressed with the solemnity of the question which in less than twenty-four hours may be decided. Are we in danger? is the question, which most men ask themselves, and which a few ask others. We are in imminent danger: is the resolute conviction of all who know upon what a slender thread of destiny even the staunchest ship depends. But, whether in danger or in safety, the storm is a spectacle which must not be lost. You desire to be vis-à-vis with King Storm. The fury into which he has lashed himself, the giant waves which do his bidding, the sensations and sentiments inspired by them, —all give a memorable illustration of one of Nature's forces.

## VII.

### EGOISTS.

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"HE is a thorough egoist." To say this—in fitting accents of righteous indignation—implies to ears generally that the individual alluded to is a condensation of selfishness—in its worst phases.

Society, it is true, has its own way of dealing with the question. If the egoist have a reputation—for wealth, power, or genius—his egoism is smilingly accepted: but if he be obscure—simply the average mortal—he is treated with proper indifference or scorn. Doubtless, society, as a great corporation, is quite right to consult its own interests; for, it cannot be denied that egoists, while interesting as characters, are troublesome as society members.

Individuality may be considered a good only when it falls in with our own particular humors or tastes: any other kind is likely to act as an irritant and call forth disagreeable comment. Still, we cannot, on that account, afford to disavow the principle involved, and, whether pleasing or otherwise, must sometimes bestow upon it a few grains of reflection. Floating opinions—so most of us find—are the easiest to take, but in the long run they do not prove as nourishing as those more difficult of access. Facts and fancies often come

to be so oddly mixed that very good people are found lending credence to the base things said of some of the noblest natures.

Egoists may not be as bad as they seem: perhaps, at heart, they are not worse than their accusers, but only differently endowed. At all events they are worth considering, and as fairly as possible.

An egoist is one who holds fast to the something which distinguishes himself from the myriads of other selves around him. Without this prop, life is a measureless tissue of questioning without answering: with it, life opens before us with wonders, far enough beyond comprehension, it is true, but wholly within range of study.

Egoism explains the law of Difference,—that which makes you what you are, others what they are. Shall we expect a musician to delight in mathematics? a sensualist to practise asceticism? a poet to be a tactician? a philosopher to become absorbed in trade? Why there should be this law of Difference—why generosity, love, and tenderness should be counterbalanced by meanness, hatred, and cruelty—cannot be explained. Nature never asks us to solve insolvable questions: in the day of reckoning—which is every day—she does not ask:

How much of life have you comprehended? but simply:

How much of yourself has come to the light? how much been applied to the truths you know, to the impulses you feel, to the inspiration given you?

A single human life! what is it? of how much

value? Not much, truly, if regarded merely in the light of a thinking or of a working power. In that light, what matters it if thousands or tens of thousands perish by war, by disease, or by that too frequent subterfuge for human criminality, "accident"! But if, in the battle, or on the sinking ship, one man of transcendent character be lost—what then! The individual in that case is no longer a particle, a skeleton, a thing to be anatomized, a fagot of bones, a handful of dust. But he is this—a force in the world before which the mightiest structures, the most marvellous inventions, the most stupendous convulsions of nature, dwindle into a nine days' wonder.

If life be merely a scheme by which nations are to alternate in ruling and being ruled; in revelling in plenty and groaning under famine; in the building up and in the destroying of proud cities,—then life is a very poor affair, one not worth the trouble of supporting.

If, on the other hand, life be a system which recognizes in every human being the possession of a self, and the possibility of a self-mastery,—then life is worth all the sacrifices the loftiest principles can suggest. The hope born of egoism is to character what strong wine is to the weary traveller—a means of temporary invigoration. For permanent strength, more is needed: the self must be identified with action.

Egoists have a creed which reads somewhat in this form :

I believe in Intuition.

I believe in Impulse.



I believe in Moods.

I believe in Aspiration.

I believe that these forces combined produce the occult activity called Soul, one destined to sway the world ages after every trace of bone and muscle has disappeared.

I believe that faithfulness to my creed constitutes the highest virtue: that disloyalty to it constitutes the basest sin.

I believe in punishment for such disloyalty, the form it assumes being as Protean as imagination can conceive, as passion can execute.

If false to my creed, I deserve to suffer every torment that outraged Reason can inflict. If to be "cursed" mean more, then I deserve that.

Intuition prompts the child to do or not to do, to take or not to take certain things: with every year of its life that germ of character is either increasing or dwindling away. Upon this depend the issues called happy or unhappy childhood.

In the adult, intuition forms conclusions without apparent reasoning. It is a gift analogous to that of the poet or musician: like that, it baffles investigation, startles us by its daring leaps. In the uneducated man intuition may be so blinded by passion, or drugged with traditions, as to be wholly unreliable. But, in the man of trained intelligence, it acquires marvellous accuracy, enabling him to establish close relations with other minds—with those unlike as well as like his own. He knows others, not by a record of special words, or deeds, or purposes; he knows them through minute lines, delicate shades of color, gentle vibrations of sound.

Intuition is the microscope of character. In a practised hand directed by a clear brain, it discerns with ease facts which seem inscrutable to the uninitiated.

Two people meet in society. Intuition instantly produces mutual interest, although then and there it cannot be gratified. Eyes and ears are on all sides. Others claim their attention, their words, their smiles. After a few moments' converse an interruption comes, and the thread of mental communion, just beginning to gain firmness, is broken. The usual routine follows. Questioning and replying, both without heartiness; a wishing on the part of earnest natures to be away; a responsibility in the staying; a sensation of genuine relief when the moment of departure arrives. This is the form of society. Underneath this, lies a pleasant reality. Intuition has established a relationship between those two people. If they meet again, there will be no feeling of strangeness. If they do not meet again, the remembrance remains; no word spoken, no feeling felt, is forgotten; so from amid all the weariness of routine, one golden grain is extracted.

Intuition brings men and women before us in their natural colors. In its light the appurtenances of wealth dwindle away, the factitious advantages of position fall into their respective places: externals, of whatsoever kind, are regarded as simply belonging to, not as being the men and women themselves. Intuition is the source of those curious effects produced by personal presence. I know two men of the same nationality, same social position, and of similar mental acquirements. But in their personality there is so glaring a contrast that, save for illustration, it were profanity to mention them in the same breath. F.'s presence

bears with it discomfort, unrest, irritability. Children shrink from asking him questions, people refrain from making a request of him, and involuntarily, when he appears, close the doors of thought and feeling. A few moments in this presence cause in me a psychological ferment, which hours of reasoning cannot allay. Even when removed from it, the recollection haunts me painfully.

Let H. enter the room, and lo, what a metamorphosis in effects! His presence woos back the equanimity which fled before the other. There is peace where anon was unrest, harmony succeeds jangling discord. To encounter that presence, miles of fatigue would be endured, scores of obstacles overcome, countless buffetings endured. What is the feeling when we unexpectedly hear one of our own long-cherished opinions expressed by other lips? Is it not an instantaneous creation of a sympathetic chain between mind and mind? B.'s personal presence makes known the existence of such a chain, not only between mind and mind, but between soul and soul.

Intuition reveals this connection: it cannot be handled like a fact of coarser mould, nor can it come in contact with prudential reasoning without being tarnished. So delicate is intuition that often while we deliberate over its acceptance, the gift is withdrawn. Flowing from a source purer than judgment, it submits to neither custom nor dictation. One simple being among the pushing, hurrying crowd who has uniformly been true to intuition is a hero of humanity. It implies a continual stepping forward, a perceptible ascent, finally a safe arrival at the goal called Individuality. Yet the world scoffs at intuition mainly

because it interferes with the easy-going doctrine familiarly known as "the natural course of events."

Intuition is to the soul what sensation is to the body. A blaze of light hurts the eye: the eye quickly turns away or closes. A thorny path wounds the feet: a smoother one is eagerly sought. Excessive heat prompts us to sigh for sea-breeze, for cool fountains, for frozen luxuries. So intuition tells the soul where to seek for comfort, for rest, for satisfaction. It drives the student into solitude, the worldling into gaiety, the artist into art, the mechanic into mechanism. It warns us not to engage in certain activities: if we neglect the warning it punishes by reminding us of the things we might do better.

Intuitions,—what prizes we lose through neglecting them! Far away in the "long ago" how distinctly some things were told, which if heeded would have brought precisely those effects now seen to be best,—but, alas, now unattainable. Strange things they seemed then—inexpedient, rebellious, heretical things. The bitter hours of middle-life are for the most part caused by the want of self-knowledge in youth. But the bitterness is lessened, possibly, by bearing in mind that knowledge even to-day does not always bring about loyalty to its commands.

I believe in Impulse: says the creed of Egoism.

To be impelled to do a thing, to feel like going somewhere, to wish to see certain people,—these are the first crude phases of impulse. It then takes color and direction from the individual, is strong or weak in proportion to his organization. Impulse is to intuition what action is to thought. I have an intuition that a

certain act will bring upon me painful results. Impulse decides whether that act shall or shall not be committed. Intuition tells me which man or which woman is disposed to be my friend. Impulse brings about the overture, by word or by act, which ratifies the intuition.

Intuition assures me of sundry possibilities, either already within reach, or attainable by industry: impulse drives me towards the goal thus pointed out, and spurs on my flagging steps. Prudence coldly descants upon the danger of yielding to impulse: yet without it where would be the bold innovations in science, in government, in society? Are not the pages of history throbbing with pulsations from that very life-current? And in us—men and women of to-day—what would our lives be worth were they not stirred by this power?

It is easy to imagine a being so devoid of impulse as to be virtually a mere automaton. Not that any being is born so: but, through assiduous working against natural qualities they can by degrees be wholly obliterated. A curious process this of undoing Nature. When a subject is sensitive, a word, a shrug, or a curl of the lip is often enough to initiate the work of undermining.

Impulse in a person of culture produces that charming spontaneity of conduct which beautifies the plainest features, lends a sparkle to the commonest speech, spreads a subtle charm over the entire manner. Impulse in the untrained man or woman generates every conceivable discomfort, every unimagined imbroglio. It is then the prolific source of malapropos words, of rash promises, of foolish plans. It drives us

into whimsical straits, into ill-timed levities, into ludicrous inconsistencies. It throws us open to charges of stupidity, of ill-nature, of malice, of selfishness: or, where passions are stronger than the moral sentiments, impulse degenerates into despotism, into lust, into cruelty.

Impulse urges us into play, into work, into society, into solitude. Partly physical, partly mental, partly psychological, it forces us into activities and conditions of a threefold nature. Impulse is the fruit of inherited tendency wedded to education: the former gives the impetus, the latter its direction. To gain a clear conception of the power of impulse, we need only note the unceasing self-control practised by the noblest types before their lives yield up their strength. If the best-endowed mortal have countless impulses which cost great outlay of will and conscience to govern, we can imagine the difficulties besetting mortals of inferior grade.

Suppose yourself a many-sided character, and give heed to the variety of impulses that from time to time call for discipline,—but without always getting it. Being many-sided, you can be proud and humble, generous and mean, wise and foolish. The development inseparable from such attributes creates not only a variety of impulses, but incessant change. The object ardently craved in one stage, in the next is regarded with cold indifference,—you even doubt whether you ever did so crave it.

Is it well or is it ill, you sometimes ask yourself, to have diverse tastes and resources? to feel that you can throw yourself with enthusiasm into many pur-

suits? You hardly know,—but you do know that the impulses springing up from so many sides are exceedingly difficult to manage.

Your impulses make you warmly interested in others, for others,—they drive you into that often fruitless labor called “sacrificing yourself for others.” To those around you perhaps this sounds like idle verbiage: they think you absorbed in petty plans of work or amusement, that you could live as well without them as with them, that you are all-sufficient to yourself. Grossly-mistaken beings! For, in reality, you give up to them far too much of yourself.

The self-sacrifice which promises positive benefit to the least of humankind must be rated far above all other projects or aims. But for any lower motive than this, self-sacrifice becomes censurable instead of laudable.

Were children required to sacrifice themselves upon all occasions for others, they would lose the choicest hours of play, the sweetest privileges of childhood. Whereas, when not over-disciplined, children revel in the direct personal pleasures which come within their scope. One seeks the playground and boon companions. Another retires to a secluded nook to ponder over Fairy Lore. Another surrounds herself with doll-children, doll-clothing, doll-furniture, doll-servants, all the paraphernalia of a miniature home. To tear children away from the illusions which alone make their existence happy, is to deliberately prepare for them hours of intolerable pain.

The same law applies to men and women. While none can escape the law of work,—the discipline enforced by Nature herself,—none are left wholly without

resources for amusement. To deprive them of these by the specious words "sacrifice yourself for others" is to cruelly misconstrue the best of truths. Taking average people in ordinary circumstances, a very serious difficulty is, to prevent them from sacrificing themselves for others.

A sympathetic woman, for instance, is prompted to take a deep interest in every human being she meets. She is fairly endowed, let us say, with mental abilities, with special gifts, with desire for progress: but, with her profound sympathies for others how much culture do those abilities or gifts receive? Nothing real, nothing earnest, nothing persevering. No sooner does she begin—take a single step towards her own culture—than fifty things she "ought" to do for other people waylay her conscience. Through an impulse engendered—not by Nature, but—by the false logic of her training, she does for others "fifty things" she refuses to do for herself.

What! Is this Nature's definition of impulse,—to annihilate the self, the divine thing without which we are simply machines turned out of one mould? For the most part, we act as if it were: we wilfully mutilate or destroy self under a mistaken notion that it is going to help others.

I believe in Moods: says the creed of Egoism.

What are Moods? Who is accountable for them? Is Nature? Is anybody or anything? It is the custom to talk about life as if we understood it; not only to talk, but to preach, to discuss, to dogmatize, to lay down the law for millions of human beings as if they were millions of automata,—and with what result?



The millions listen,—but that is all. When it comes to action, every individual prefers making his own personal experience, and says :

If life be a mystery, I desire to make my own interpretation, my own deductions. Moods are to me facts as substantial as any object that can be seen or touched. Whether amiable or morose, quick-witted or dull, joyous or melancholy, I can trace clearly what has induced the special condition. And noticing the fluctuations of thought and feeling in one specimen, I am led to note the same process in other specimens.

People in whom physical vitality preponderates know little about moods, and show no mercy to those of their neighbors. When with such people, then, it is indiscreet to allude to moods,—worse than indiscreet to avow their existence in ourselves.

In a special sense moods are those fascinating phases of being which stamp an epoch for the thinker, for the artist, for the musician,—for genius in any form. They come when least expected or sought, are to be accepted without demur at time or season. Early or late, convenient or not, they are to be welcomed, entertained, or endured. If yielded to, all is well ; Nature is satisfied, and we are permitted to go our way : if we resist them, we induce soul-sickness. Neglected moods represent lost opportunities, wasted powers, ruined hopes. Utilized moods speak to men in ravishing strains of music, in immortal works of art, in divine poems.

Children and illiterate people have moods without knowing their source : only when ascending in the mental scale do we find causes for both the best and

the worst conditions of being. How far are we able to induce or control moods? Temperament seems to be their first perceptible origin. Most of us are fashioned by this powerful influence: a very small minority only are driven into examining it, into modifying it by other influences.

Why, asks the being of joyous temperament, should I not live my life merrily? I feel the sun's warmth, I respire heaven's air, I hear the happy voices of Nature. Nothing can shake my belief in joy! Nothing can daunt my expectations of possessing, so long as life lasts, my full share! Thoughtless, susceptible, pleasure-loving, he revolves in a little circle bounded by sensation, by gratification, by civil or religious restraint. Not that he is callous to the suffering of others,—he feels, he gives, he helps: but, the object removed from sight, his mind is as free as ever. He is not troubled by analysis of suffering; no dreaminess, no conflicting emotions, no bitterness of regret, no longings for amelioration, beset him. He feels pleasure, he feels pain; but he knows neither rapture nor despondency. Enjoyment to the joyous temperament is to see, to touch, to taste, to possess. It is associated with color, with sound, with form; it is inseparable from facts, incidents, events.

What, after all, is life! exclaims the being of melancholy temperament. Is it anything more than a repetition of formalities, a chaos of ungratified wishes and bitter disappointments! His days are an incessant alternation of thinking and feeling. He interrogates, ponders, analyzes. He is oppressed by the weight of existence. He craves ardently, regrets bitterly,

grieves passionately. He knows the futility of so doing, yet this knowing does not prevent him from falling again and again into the same condition.

Child's play for adults is not diverting unless there are merry-hearted children to be made happy. For this man life seems child's play without the children—nothing more. Once it amused him, now it does not: he needs something stronger, deeper. He throws himself into earnest work, is energetic, persevering, enthusiastic: but here, too, he finds satisfaction only in the doing, not in the thing done. Compared to the image in his mind, the semblance of it is bungling, unshapely, spiritless. He carries ideality into all the externals of his situation. The only life he accounts *real* is the one he *imagines*. The daily routine, however varied, however colored, is strangely *unreal*.

Life is dreamed instead of lived. He dreams not only at night, he dreams by day, in the world, everywhere, uninterruptedly. And how much sweeter are these dreams than the realities he tastes, touches, holds! Active pursuits are shunned, mechanical duties disliked, prosaic routine zealously resisted. Men and women are observed less for the things they do, than for the ideas, motives, and sentiments they exemplify. Activity assumes shadowy proportions: Meditation is clothed with prismatic hues.

The best things of life procure him only a fleeting satisfaction. In the very hour of hope's fruition, when his cup of bliss is full to the brim, the consciousness of *no more than this* impairs enjoyment. Imagination creates insatiability. If he himself be crowned with joy, his mind is still permeated with awe and sadness,

—awe at the immensity of Nature, sadness for human darkness and error.

But the being of melancholy temperament is not at all times melancholy. He has moods which might be called attacks of gladness. In such an hour he can sing, laugh, enjoy. He is capable of either silent brooding or ardent demonstration. In all the inner chambers of consciousness he hears dulcet voices inviting him to listen, to absorb, to luxuriate. Without apparent cause—without good tidings, without wine, drug, or elixir—he is suddenly suffused with felicity of an exquisite flavor.

How account for such a mood? The sun shines no more brilliantly than yesterday and many previous days. All about him, are the same coming and going, laughing and weeping, revelling and sorrowing. Nothing outward is changed. If he had made another being happy, done a generous act, vanquished an evil habit, his mood might be understood. But none of these have been done. He finds himself in the most enviable of conditions without in the least deserving it. What right has he to these sweet moments? May not Fortune have designed them for another mortal, presently come forward with an apology for the mistake and whisk away the lovely burden? But so deep is his content that even apprehension cannot ruffle its surface. The causes which usually harass and vex, are temporarily deprived of their sting. Amid the débris of intellect, of sensibility, of endeavor, he discerns glimpses of true life. Searching farther, he finds earnestness in trifling, harmony in discord, development in repression.

Moods wholly unaccountable to others are often

clearly explicable to the self,—often too, the explication is better withheld than made public. The charges of “moping,” “moroseness,” “selfishness,” may be more endurable than the stupid wonder, open scoffing, or covert sneer of accusers.

I believe in Aspiration: says the creed of Egoism.

To a child of earnest but timid nature, aspiration seems a shadow, a vision, an unreality, a something beautiful belonging exclusively to genius, never to be possessed by the average ungifted mortal. But with maturity, that same nature sees that aspiration is a universal attribute, a truth inseparable from average human lives.

To have faith in your feeling, in your hope, in your conviction,—this is the idea of aspiration. To seek the unfolding of that idea is the visible part of aspiration, the idea realized.

Do you pant for an heroic life? If so, here around you are countless opportunities: here, just where you are, just as you are, is the sphere of action. Never at any period in the world's history were there greater occasions for charity, for generosity, for humility, for gentleness, for love. Never at any epoch in the future will there come a more fitting hour to show of what stuff you are made. What if your life to-day be, in all respects, different from that once desired! Destiny gives you not what you like, but what is best for progress. Murmuring against that decree, you betray human weakness without changing a single feature of the situation.

Will a child believe you if you tell him toys will not make him happy? No: he takes all he can get,

convinced that every new one holds the supreme good he seeks. Only after repeated experiments does he discover that happiness lies in himself, not in the toys. So people crave the toys displayed in tempting array before Pleasure's booths. Yet, were wishes gratified as quickly as formed, where would be the individuality which finally proves the choicest part of character?

Individuality takes countless forms in men and in women; the latter usually are taught to think it forbidden fruit,—and perhaps the teaching is not unwise. But, for the woman in whom individuality is strongly marked, something more than ordinary teaching is needed. Happy for her if art, or science, or literature, or society, offer a vent for the flood of life within her soul!

Aspiration is at all times consonant with sex, with age, with mental endowment, with training. Imagine a little girl, living amid luxury, who longs to be poor that she may work for the support of her parents, and thus feel herself of some use. Childish, very silly it sounds,—yet, it gives an inkling of aspiration. A few years pass, and the girl has no longer a desire for poverty: her sole aim now, is to do and to be what those in authority wish. Her thoughts, her tastes, her feelings are wholly unlike theirs, and it is not without continuous struggle that adaptation is accomplished. During many years she tries hard to kill the self which rebels against conformity; and she so nearly succeeds in her murderous purpose, that for a long time vitality is wholly suspended.

At intervals come flashes of soul-lightning to startle her into a possibility of better things than personal ease and comfort. She desires to become a missionary:

sincerity is the basis of the desire,—but she fails to make it a reality because of timidity, doubts of her own Christianity. Next, comes the wish to be a teacher in her own country, to devote herself body and soul to the enlightenment of those less favored than herself. Again she is thwarted: family complications render the plan impracticable. Later still she is possessed by the spirit of philanthropy. The misery she beholds excites indignation, compassion, sorrow. She longs to abandon home and friends, to become a Sister of Charity, pledging every moment, every faculty, to the alleviation of distress. Were she a Romanist, vows of abnegation would soon place a perpetual barrier between herself and the world.

But Fate has other designs: it drives her out of seclusion into the busy life of her day and position; sends her into foreign lands, brings her in relation with many strange things, many new people. Changes without and within gradually produce changed views, different aims. Aspiration does not die,—it merely assumes other shapes. The quondam earnest-restless little girl at last becomes an artist and leads one of the happiest of artist-lives.

Could I but know how many years I have to live! Easy then to decide how much time to give to work, how much to pleasure! So exclaims an ardent youth. The wish is as natural as the reasoning is false.

To believe in death—the certainty of its coming—is equivalent to knowing the specified hour. Who, realizing that the summons may come at any moment, would not be inspired to put the best of himself into action!

A test question to every individual, young or old, would be :

Were this to be your last year on earth, to what special pursuit would you devote yourself?

To revelling in pleasure ! sighs the voluptuary.

To the accumulation of gold ! mutters the miser.

To the perfecting of my instrument ! exclaims the inventor.

To the solution of my problem ! answers the mathematician.

To the finishing of my picture ! cries the artist.

To the search after truth ! responds the philosopher.

A list, endless in length, boundless in variety, suggests itself,—and in every answer would be found a definition of aspiration.

Solitude is the fountain-head of aspiration. Released temporarily from the din and tumult of outward life, the self gladly gives way to an introspective tendency. To define the results of soul-action is essentially the poet's faculty. In prose, the words rest, peace, content, come nearest ; yet, compared to the state defined, they are cold and inanimate. In solitude, aspiration gains strength, firmness, beauty : it then discerns possibilities once barely dreamed of, audaciously grasps what elsewhere seemed sacrilege to think of. The gross realities of life are remanded to their several places ; rambling thoughts are gathered in, tumultuous emotions swayed by reason, life-projects planned under its guidance.

Solitude throws an illumination over the perplexing realities around us. All that the world can give—health, prosperity, love—cannot prevent an occasional



sense of unrest from overpowering the soul. It is as if it were travelling, sojourning now and then in pleasant places—as on this planet—yet never losing the uneasy consciousness of exile. Solitude lends the power of estimating human joys, of applying to them the conflicting properties of the term Bitter-sweet.

Bitter-sweet! Can any word better express what all mortals, even in moments of supreme happiness, feel? Bitter-sweet the sunshine, the singing of birds, the rose-tinted cloud, the balmy air of spring, the fragrant rose of summer! Bitter-sweet the merry voices of children, the earnest tones of friendship, the passionate whisper of love! Bitter-sweet whatever earth can give of delight, of rapture! And why? Because, in a single instant Destiny may poison our delight, paralyze our rapture. Take physical existence—this rare combination of breathing, seeing, feeling, thinking—on what a slender thread it hangs! Conscious of its risks, how cautiously we step, how guardedly we act, how reverently we admire the beauties of creation!

Solitude is like that hour of twilight when, momentarily checked in our wonted activity, we stop and gaze into the vivid coals of our fireside. Bright and burning, well-nigh scorching they are, yet we gaze as if fascinated. The pain we feel is involuntarily likened to that of by-gone experiences: mingled with it is a subtle sense of luxury we would not willingly miss.

Night hours produce the purest extract of solitude. By day there is always the intruding apparition of an active duty—a positive, an expected, or imaginary one—to be performed: a train of thought can be indulged

in only under protest. But at night—that dividing line between To-day and To-morrow—we find the essential atmosphere of reflection. To-day, with its toil, its temptation, its struggle, is over; its deeds, of whatever color or kind, are indelibly stamped upon consciousness; memory will recall them either with poignant regret or with tender joy. To-morrow—that swiftly-approaching Presently—we shall again be drawn into the vortex called activity. And why murmur, after learning that inscrutable but beneficent designs are wrapped in that irksome, ceaseless routine!

But this stillness of night hours,—while it lasts let us drink deep of its potent charm! With more of this, would there not be less strife, less meanness, less arrogance? Would not more stillness induce more thought? more thought, a juster estimate of human needs?

People seek the distractions of sense to get rid of self: they want to forget the claim that presses, the reflection that urges, the conscience that troubles. Solitude has no attraction for the worldling, for the hypocrite, for the villain: its warnings and goadings are less endurable than even exhaustion, detection, or punishment. But, the strong-souled man—what a reserve of force he feels within himself in moments of meditation! And, if he prove refractory, refusing to use this force, it twists and tortures his soul until it is thrown prostrate in agony. What then? Confession, recantation, oaths of amendment, vehement professions of loyalty,—these follow in quick succession. If with returning strength the same weakness again conquers, the torture is renewed.

The world has no sympathy with the Egoist. Let me imagine a short dialogue :

World.—Why do you act so strangely, so differently from others of your age and position ?

Egoist.—To answer fully would require many pages, much confidence,—in brief, an unveiling of the self which I am by no means prepared to give. Even were I willing, you would not take time to read the explanation, so please accept conciseness as intended courtesy. I lead this life because of something to do which could not be done while listening to your seductions, following your votaries. At the same time, I acknowledge with due gratitude the benefits derived from you in times past.

World.—By acting thus, you seclude yourself from your fellow-creatures, become estranged from even your own family. How can you reconcile this with your idea of duty ?

Egoist.—Justice to others presupposes justice to self.

World.—But, since you admit certain advantages derived from me, do you not owe something to my prejudices, to my opinions ?

Egoist.—Undoubtedly : and my tribute to you is generous beyond computation. Not a day that I do not bow to your decrees : in coming, going, doing ; in accepting disagreeable tasks ; in submitting to irksome domestic rules ; in holding intercourse with people I naturally shrink from ; in performing offices for others—at great inconvenience to myself and very ill-appreciated by them—in these and countless other ways you compel my obedience. In fact, when I compare my life with what, independent of you, it might be, I

find myself still far too much under your influence. No one suspects or can imagine how frequently I deny myself the dearest delights, solely out of regard for you.

World.—You talk at random. You are under a pitiful hallucination,—in reality, you give me nothing. But, taking you at your own estimate—merely for sake of the argument—how do you know you are right? May you not be the victim of a wayward imagination, of a morbid self-consciousness?

Egoist.—I believe right and wrong to be purely relative, and that no power save conscience can decide for me personally, the things to do or not to do.

World.—Is it not possible to combine the two—mingle in my diversions, yet reserve certain hours for seclusion and meditation?

Egoist.—I once thought so and acted upon it. In my present stage, my inner wants are so numerous, so clamorous, that all the hours I can snatch from the absolute requirements of family life, are not sufficient for satisfying them. When these demands—including the personal ones essential for physical existence—are complied with, I find the surplus hours vexatiously short for my purposes.

World.—I am out of all patience with you! I cannot extenuate your conduct! Why think of it,—your arguments, if listened to, would thoroughly destroy my influence! Instead of the crowd of subjects now at my feet, I should see people actually going about developing their individuality,—this with an earnestness and an ardor greatly detrimental to my interests. No, no—if not with me, you are against me—the old story—hence, for principle's sake, I do not con-

sider you worthy of the slightest esteem. If you do not choose to pay me court, I must neglect you,—more than this, do my utmost to prevent others of your class from following your example.

Egoist.—I knew your disposition long before I withdrew from your charmed circle,—realized that no mercy need be expected. To do you justice, I must admit that even in seclusion I feel your potency. Indeed, my independence is very far from being a thing actually achieved.

World.—Good words even from an enemy are not to be despised. Pray, before parting, may I ask what affords the greatest satisfaction in your eccentric mode of life?

Egoist.—Assuredly: for, although not presuming to lay down any rule for another, or even to take any step to bring him to my way of thinking, I am always ready to give personal testimony in behalf of honest conviction. This, then, is my answer:

In that life I have found a fragment of the Philosopher's Stone,—that mysterious tablet which so long puzzled the brains of humanity, but which in the light of modern science is presumed to be but another term for happiness. Pardon me, if I add, that while under your sway, I never in any one moment felt as light-hearted, as joyous, as now during many consecutive hours. That I cannot be so in all hours, I attribute largely to your former influence.

World (with disagreeable self-assurance).—Look out, my dear Egoist! Since you acknowledge that I can in some degree affect you, I may still be enabled to thwart your fine plans! You do not know all the secrets of my power: even if you did know, the human

nature in you would find it difficult to resist certain fascinations I can bring to bear upon it. Spite of your apparent calmness and high-sounding resolves, rest assured I have not yet done with you.

(Exit World with a low bow and a sinister smile.)

## VIII.

### PASSIONATE WOMEN.

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CLEOPATRA, Semiramis, Catherine II., Mary of Scots, among the queens; Aspasia, Lais, Phryne, Ninon, Marion de Lorme, and others among non-royalty,—these women have a deep significance, as illustrative of the fact called Human Passions.

But, what have good women, gentle women, high-bred women of this century, to do with such names as those? What,—you ask? A great deal,—a great deal more than conventionality cares to acknowledge. And, doubtless, there is safety in that scrupulous care to cover, to keep down, to silence what cannot be helped or changed, and which is nevertheless censurable. Most women—Heaven be praised—are not passionate but dispassionate. Better it should be so—better for themselves, better for men, better for family-life, better for civilization. This much granted, must we shut our eyes, close our ears, and profess to ignore the fact that women have passions?

Can any one—even the most fastidious—be hurt by looking at truth, looking at it with intelligent mind and honest purpose? I think not: but, dear madam, you need not be alarmed by this preamble, need not turn away from possible spoken heresy. Whatever

may happen to find its way here will be drawn, not from any scandal records whatsoever, but from life as you and I know it in our respectable American society. It is simply to express a conviction that human passions have not changed with passing centuries; that with due acknowledgment of all the outward changes brought about by war, by religion, by education, sameness in character is forcibly manifested by everything seen and heard about us.

Why is it that those women, and others of like reputation, are fondly immortalized in history and in fiction? It is not their beauty alone, as we all concede, nor is it their rank or deeds. No—it is a something far more powerful in effects than either of those,—it is the temperament called passionate. This, added to beauty, grace, and mental culture, produced their extraordinary power of fascination.

Passionate women have not vanished from the world: they still exist, still evince their inconsistencies, their charms, and their sway. And who would deplore it? Ah,—woman would not be what she is were she passionless! Fire is not necessarily destructive, nor is passion: reined in by reason it gives forth a warmth, a sweetness, a spirit, of which cold natures know only the name. Yet, it is not in domestic life that such women find their best chances of happiness. The passive condition of wife and mother is too colorless a one for their intense feelings and variable moods. The self-abnegation it imposes does violence to a self that craves recognition and desires its full share of life's joys. In general, then, marriage to such women proves a catastrophe involving themselves and all con-



nected with them in misery. In special cases where like is mated to like—in temperament, in education, in tastes—there results a degree of bliss to both parties which words fail utterly to depict: but, these occur so rarely that it seems almost a waste of interest to mention them. It is safer for all of us not to expect to be exceptions, but rather to count ourselves among average mortals.

But, for some other positions a woman of impassioned nature is pre-eminently qualified. In whatever pertains to art, to literature, to music, to friendship, she is that union of strength and gentleness which surprises while it fascinates. Above all these even, her nature is peculiarly susceptible to love, and peculiarly fitted to inspire it. This last makes what the world phrases a dangerous woman,—dangerous because her sphere of attraction is liable to spread over ground not consecrated by law, order, and conventionality.

Society, then, very properly, looks out for itself. It erects barriers against the peril dreaded, and forbids its members overleaping them, under penalties so severe—at least in our own country and in England—that very few are bold enough to make the experiment. We all know these barriers,—know them by sight, by hearsay, by drilling. They are not pleasant, many think, but all agree that they are good and safe for the community, that they must be maintained at least in doctrine and in appearance, if not in reality. Nor need it be inferred that because women have the passionate temperament they must infringe upon society's safeguards. By no means. Danger does not imply certainty of accident: indeed, to know where the hazard is, often proves the best assurance of safety.

Shall we glance—no more than this in such desultory pages—at a few familiar types of such women? And does it matter where we begin, whether with the highest or with the lowest? Difficult, indeed, in reading the book of Nature to tell who is high and who low: there we find the only perfect equality known or ever to be known.

The most privileged women of the nineteenth century are—perhaps it would be safer to say, might be—the women of our own country. Assuredly, it would be hardly possible to conceive of greater respect from men, greater freedom of action for themselves, greater opportunities for education, greater likelihood for felicity. All this, be it understood, when there is no perversion of natural qualities, no vitiation of character in either sex. Among these women let me sketch one to illustrate the impassioned nature when subjected to various checks and guards.

You belong to a class to which the term disciplined—in the sense of sheltered, watched, walled-in—may apply. Everything around you, from the first breath of consciousness up to the present moment, has been conducive to mental and moral development. Family ties, comfort and innocent pleasures, were your birth-right. Moreover, you learned very early to wear the finely-wrought but strong armor of Conventionality. Numberless observances—many of them petty and irksome enough, but wisely instituted for your sex—were insisted upon as part of your life. Even if you often felt like resisting, you gave way under dread of the moral whip—social frowns.

You reach womanhood. You are not ugly, not

afflicted ; you are conscientious, you are sympathetic, you wish to live a good life. Yet,—how is this ? It is not as easy as you once thought it,—the living that life. Were you to tell all your thoughts and desires just as they come,—what an array they would make ! You are mortified, you are vexed, you know not what to make of them. Gradually, light comes in. You are forced, are you not, to acknowledge the existence of certain troublesome passions ? Not that you need blush at such an avowal—not at all—but it is simply necessary for the understanding of other kinds of women, living under other influences than yours.

Your life presents a fair aspect, yet you find yourself liable to disappointments, in an infinity of forms and colors. You form a wish, its fulfilment is thwarted : a desire is awakened, its gratification is denied. The wish is not exorbitant, the desire is not unnatural, yet neither of them may be granted. You submit because forced to ; but cheeks flushed, eyes emitting angry light, step heavy, voice sharp,—these betray your inner agitation. You hear much vague talk about moral strength, right and wrong sentiments : but, you wonder whether those who talk so glibly know to how slight an extent your hopes and passions are amenable to rule.

As well call sickness health, bitter herbs sweet, imprisonment liberty, as call disappointment good. No argument can make pain agreeable, although it can lessen distress by suggesting means of alleviation. So with this thwarting of human desires, which men and children call by the same name—disappointment. There is no shame in feeling it keenly every time it is

inflicted ; but, a great deal in allowing that feeling to annoy others whose ill-luck it is to be near us at such seasons.

What other women call happiness you well know,—how they obtain it you know too. But what they call by that name you repudiate ; so when you appear discontented there is ground for it. You grant that your circumstances are good, that comforts and luxuries are in their way desirable, yet you cannot prize them as other women do. They find exhaustless interest in discussing this or that arrangement, change, or color ; in giving orders to tradespeople and servants ; they never weary of going here and there, driving, walking, gossiping, managing.

But you—wretched malcontent that you are—look upon all these fine externals as merely the antechamber to something brighter and better. You seem to be waiting in a chilly, dark, comfortless place, with strange people's eyes upon you, until the door of the inner room where you belong is opened. You know just how warm and inviting it is, and how instantly your mood would be changed were you there. There are hours when you ask yourself, Is there, then, some flaw in my individuality which prevents the attainment of life's greatest good ? Am I unreasonable, exacting, rapacious ? Heaven knows ; you do not feel as if you claimed much,—yet if not, why is it you see and feel so unlike others around you ?

The why is this : you are a passionate woman chained down to a passive routine. In addition to that temperament you have quick intelligence and broad culture. This being so, life is full enough for you and busy enough ; for such gifts without a strong

hand over them, mean mischief. You, who know more than church, tradition, and social law tell you, must pay the penalty of knowledge,—must know life without living it.

Does that sound hard? Not more so than the thing is, not more so than most things are. You admit facts; you reason upon them, convince yourself that nothing can be changed, that whatever is—right or not right—is wholly beyond your control. Yet, that same cold conviction never satisfies your passionate heart,—it rebels, cries out, refuses to be resigned. And who would ridicule that cry! You are a real flesh and blood woman, you desire ardently the thing you know to be good and beautiful.

In vain do moralists preach to you: Happiness is not-to be found here below! Away, far away from this earth is bliss to be sought! 'Tis false! retorts Nature—speaking through your heart—with just indignation. Happiness *is* here on this same, much-maligned earth! Because one mortal does not find it, or, because another finds, only to be forbidden to touch it, shall it be proclaimed that there is no such thing?

Passion often makes you appear envious. Yet to weep at sight of another's joy is not necessarily from a malicious grudge. May it not arise from a purely human longing for the same kind of joy? You then—envious woman—are unhappy and know the cause. Does this help the matter? Not a whit: it rather augments it, although enabling you, perhaps, to endure without outward sign. Who can deny that Nature is often cruel! When, then, you feel her privations, wince under her blows, writhe under her castigations, shall

you falsely declare that you do not suffer? Away with such sophistry! You are suffering—acutely, continuously—and you dare not stultify reason by denial. You do not—you wish to proclaim it far and wide that Nature is often more unjust, more aggravating, more cruel than any earthly parent—not vitiated—would ever be. Of no fact in life have you stronger proof, of no truth are you more thoroughly convinced. You look at the question on all sides, ponder it with all the earnestness of a devout mind, rack conscience with numberless expedients for the sole purpose of arriving at truth. And where has this discipline left you?

In a state which words can only outline, not color. You are immured, you are in galling fetters, you are deprived of the very breath of life, while all the time the true self is in wild rebellion against what is. Immortal gods! you exclaim, is this all of life? Will there be no change? Must you live on to the end in this fierce contention with the elements created by Nature herself? What have you done that she should deal thus hardly with you? Why, in the best years of youth, did she torment you with a multitude of chimerical fancies which came to naught? why finally show you one you could love with all the intensity of an intense nature, use every device for knitting your souls together, and then—ruthlessly bid you part for ever? Can you forget the storm that followed and rent your very being,—that made you in moments of agony question the beneficence of existence?

You have no wish to do ill,—either to injure any other, even the very least, or to be false to yourself,

to the highest you know. Yet, heaven only knows what dire temptations often beset you, especially in one direction—in that subtlety called Heart. There is the rock upon which you are ever in danger of destruction. You feel it, see it, know it, reason about it, warn yourself against it, prepare yourself for it,—and all with what little avail! So often are you dashed against its craggy surface that you would fain shut your eyes and sleep the sleep of oblivion until the danger shall have passed.

You desire the thing you cannot have,—you crave it and are unhappy because of denial. Denial,—from whom? Who forbids it? What prevents you from taking, from holding, from enjoying? You are not bound down by any visible chains: you can, if you choose, take the cup of pleasure—as others before you have done—take it with such a zest that you think yourself well fortified against results. You half resolve to do it,—why not live as others have lived?

Suspense! Do you know what that is? Waiting for some one you want very much to see,—waiting and watching and counting and fearing? If you are cold and apathetic, you can know nothing about it, cannot even understand these words. Perhaps, upon the whole, you are happier for not knowing, for not understanding. But this would be neither your merit nor demerit: whatever your constitution, you must deal with it as best you may.

Suspense! Waiting, watching, counting, fearing, hoping—this last only very little. Suppose you are a woman in this unenviable state, and the suspense pertains to an expected visitor—one in whom you feel

special interest. We do not ask what manner of woman you are, whether of high or low degree, of strong or weak brain, of great or little culture. One thing only we desire to know—your temperament. If this be of the warm, susceptible kind, we can imagine the rest. Suspense, then, means this. You are in a highly-wrought emotional condition, one which no amount of world-discipline can control. You are not a child, therefore do not openly fret and fume, stamp or scream,—yet it would be a relief to pent-up feeling so to do. This strange inner turbulence, what does it mean? what portend? It is painful, almost as if the woman within that visible form were being suffocated. Your pulses, how they throb!—the heart, especially, has expanded until the garments over it seem to press upon and hinder its action. You can do nothing while this lasts—be it moments or hours; you are absolutely powerless. You can do nothing save brace yourself to bear it, hold on, as it were, to the whispers of Reason. It is not the first, not the second, nor the third time,—you have had frequent similar attacks, as you know to your cost. Alas! will it be so to the end of time? Will you, must you live on through all the years—few or many—of life, liable at any hour to be thus stretched on the rack of suspense? Is it the penalty you pay for the hours of keen enjoyment known when with the one you expect? But how cold and inanimate reason seems in comparison to this glowing, throbbing soul, which now claims its own! You would fain have relief at any price; you are wearied, harassed, taxed beyond endurance. If it would avail aught, how fervently you could pray for release—release even at the cost of your imaginative



nature! How cheerful, calm, and unperturbed other lives seem,—how unlike this of yours!

An hour comes which tests your mettle. You are in presence of the coveted good, that which the self in you pronounces the best of all human joys—Loving and Being Loved.

With what transport could you not seize the sparkling cup held to your lips,—seize and drain it to the last drop! A great thirst possesses you, and that within the cup will quench it, while leaving a remembrance for all time. There is nobody—nothing—to prevent you,—with one draught you may satisfy hunger, thirst, pain,—you may live! Your face shows your wavering,—your pulses speak eloquently,—every fibre of your being vibrates to a vast longing for just one draught!

How—you hesitate, refuse, draw back,—now in the very moment of fruition? Yes—you do more than this,—with your own hand you dash the cup to the ground, scattering the drops of life over an irredeemable past. Gone, gone forever are these golden moments! Gone! Gone! Gone! is the refrain now ringing in your ears and through your heart. Gone,—and by your voluntary act!

Shall you say why? Because—because—there was *Poison* in the cup! Because, under all its sparkle, all its joy-giving properties, all its entrancing promises, lay the single fatal grain which means either infamy or death! A warning entered your soul—sent by whom? by what?—and threw your outer self into a spell of reserve, of silence, of fear. You stood like one in a dream, scarce knowing what it meant, but

certain that you must not speak, move, or act. Then came the decisive moment, when the cup must either touch the lips or be hurled from you. It—the last—was done,—and done, not blindly, but under a full consciousness of its cost.

And now that the test is over, that cost is at its height,—there is a surging of human passions within your frame. You know it was right to do, you see, too, from what after-curse you have been saved,—and yet, are not content. Spite of reason and right—of everything—you are prostrate with dire disappointment.

Perhaps you would find more solace if you could think that the quality called virtue had withheld your lips from the tempting cup.—But you do not for an instant think so. You see that passion strong and glowing like yours, that this, without powerful checks, would long ago have swept you away. You refused pleasure not because you did not desire it, but because your mind saw the dregs. Painful as starvation is, there is a something worse,—this it is that kept you in your place. Yes—you grant all this unhesitatingly, but do not on that account feel your pain lessened. You hear, too, many canting voices about you preaching the doctrine of Content. Content, forsooth,—Content in the very hour when a fierce hunger of the heart is denied the food it needs! You reject such a doctrine, indignantly, and cry out, dear Mother Nature, must we, then, ignore the truth we feel, while we accept the truth we see or know? Surely, if you are tender and merciful, you cannot wish us to do that!

The soul rallies from passion as the body does from

pain. In the hour of calm you look upon the past as you would upon a violent storm or an earthquake. These gusts of passion which sweep through your soul, will they never cease their visitations? You have heard that they diminish with years,—but how is it in your case? They were, perhaps, slow in developing, but now you yourself are amazed at their duration and intensity. They conflict with reason, with custom, they shock your sense of fitness, of delicacy. You abhor the ideas they suggest, you shrink from recognition of facts invisible to other eyes, but to yours solid as stones: you writhe under the flagellation of truth.

Eternal Force! Inscrutable Nature! Why, at your bidding, must these pangs be endured! Why must you be torn by these elements, tossed hither and thither betwixt reason and feeling, until every atom of your organization quivers with pain! To have strong passions and acumen to see the peril of gratifying them, makes life an unceasing struggle. This has been your lot,—has been and is—perhaps ever will be.

Yet, you are not always in this whirl of emotion. Often, indeed, you are so unmoved, tranquil, that you smile at past alarms, think yourself safe from fresh assaults. Surely, you say to yourself, those hours of turbulence can never return! But lo, a trivial incident, a sudden thought, a reminiscence, a human face or form,—either of these in a single flash destroys your equilibrium. While realizing the consummate folly of passion, you are yet liable at any moment to be shattered by it. Reason shows you yourself as in a glass. You frown, you jeer, you condemn,—you protest against the representation of yourself there beheld,—

and yet, a voice reiterates persistently that you are what you would fain not be.

But, can you help having the thoughts that come? deny the facts which incessantly rise up to harass you? root out the desires Nature implanted in you? Can you, in brief, be other than you are? No: you cannot help, cannot deny, cannot root out,—can do none of these. But, in the same breath comes an assurance that there is a talisman you are to seek and bind about your neck to counteract the seeming unchangeable—a talisman called self-control.

Why indeed should you wish yourself cold, stolid, passionless! Why wish you did not feel the power of grace, beauty, love! Why wish that your eyes saw less, that your mind comprehended less, that your pulses beat less strongly! May not the attributes which all your life have proved a source of contention between body and soul, finally be made to yield an essence at once sweet and wholesome? But, this only through the aforesaid talisman,—and to gain that you must first undo a mass of miserable tangles. You must be the woman you would be not merely during a crisis, but in the prosaic hours of ordinary life. You must see that even in the most impassioned of lives passion is but an episode; but, upon self-control hangs the decision whether that episode is to be blessing or curse.

Of all enigmas presented to you the one called self is by far the most puzzling. The contradictions, inconsistencies, extravagances, caprices—the heaven knows what of conflicting forces in your nature strike you with a sort of horror. Yet, if driven to the confessional of Reason, you are forced to acknowledge

that there is good ground for whatever of mischief or misery that same self works. You could portray, if you chose, step by step, just why and how you have been drawn into the quicksands which threaten to engulf self-respect.

A passionate heart without fitting occupation—this has been the fatal flaw of your life. You see it, deplore it, groan under it, weep over the many dear treasures of life it has lost you. Two things you bear away with you from this confessional: one—that there is no escaping the penalties of either ignorance or weakness of will; the other—that there is no help and no hope beyond yourself: that if you refuse to accept and wield the power the gods give you, you incur justly the sword of retribution.

Finally, you make no pretence of virtue, do not even talk of it,—but have come out of the fire of experience a woman both gentle and charitable. Seeing of what, more than once, you were so nearly capable, you cannot judge any other woman harshly,—you have only pity and tenderness for even the weakest or worst.

Very young, very beautiful, very poor women,—plenty of them here in our midst. Is it difficult to call up to mind one who in her personal struggles with the world may illustrate her class?

As a little girl you were made to feel all manner of disadvantages and privations, except one thing—admiration. Of that you had always a superabundance coming to you from every quarter, wisely and unwisely bestowed. Your parents—hard-working, illiterate people—fed and clothed you, even that being no easy

matter. You went to school, but only during a few years of girlhood, because your help was needed at home. Finally, in your full bloom of youthful beauty, you become dissatisfied with the home which gives you so little of the fulness of life you hear of as existing in other homes. You go out to seek your fortune in the public arena of a great city. There you find work, in abundance, but you find, too, what you are but little prepared for, either by education or experience—temptations. Your beauty attracts so many adorers that it makes work seem a secondary matter. Men of every grade—rich, handsome, gallant, fascinating men—profess themselves your slaves. For a time it is very pleasant, this walking in the garden of Adulation. Its flowers are highly colored, heavy-scented; its fountains seductive to sight and sensation; its paths endless in promises of variety and pleasure.

But, at last, you grow weary of the sweets of flattery. The womanhood in you begins to feel the need of something more than surface homage: the thought of a home looms up in your mind as the one thing yet wanting to your happiness. You now listen indifferently to gallantry, but eagerly to even a semblance of affection. It comes to you in noble shape, in sincere tones, with seeming honesty of purpose. You know nothing of worldly ways, of their strong influence upon even generous-hearted men; you know nothing of human passions, whether of your own or those of others; you know nothing save the craving for the ardent love now waiting for your acceptance. You love passionately—you believe implicitly. . . .

For a space you live,—live for the first time in your

life. Your heart and soul are full to the brim of that elixir which wiser ones than you—of both sexes—in all ages—have pronounced the one good of existence which brings no satiety. But, for you—poor fluttering bird—this gilded cage, these dainty morsels, this intoxicating draught, are only temporary: for how long or how short a time, depends upon other human passions like—and yet unlike—yours.

Could you but see—as you will years later—the contrast of facts! On your side, all you owned in the world—yourself—was given up unreservedly: on the other side—your companion's—there was given up only a portion of self, that to be redeemed whenever circumstances or personal change of feeling made it expedient. Passion on both sides,—but in what different degrees, with what diverse results! Poor child! if you had but known what many of your more enlightened, better protected, but, at heart, no more chaste sisters know, you could never have been led into those transient relations. For, you were not born with the fiery nature which makes some other heretical women. You are simply an ignorant, loving, beautiful woman, plunged by one false step into an abyss from which no earthly power can raise you—raise you to your prior position.

Very unjust, very unchristian, very cruel is the decree—but who can change the public verdict of any age? Perhaps, the whole realm of Misery—thickly populated as it is—can show no deeper distress than yours. For, in other cases there is respect, help, sympathy from both sexes: in yours, there is neither of these to mitigate the crime of one error.

Especially are you made to suffer from the con-

tumely and scorn of your own sex. They shrink from you as from contamination, would not suffer you to touch the hem of their garments, or to enter their houses,—nay, even to work for them. Yet, many of those same self-righteous women, young and old—as the world knows, if you, poor bruised dove, do not—have not the smallest scruple in helping themselves to many choice bits of stolen fruit, whenever it cannot impair the lustre of that fine outer garment called Reputation.

From men—to their honor be it said—you receive more justice, more charity, more tenderness, but it can give you no substantial aid because of heavy balance on the part of the other sex. Upon the whole, then, you see yourself blighted and doomed to life-long wretchedness. Surely, in your hours of bitterness you must come to a keen perception of the power of human passions! Yes, you do, but, alas, it brings you no benefits,—neither food nor clothing, neither consolation nor self-respect. How could it, indeed? You have had no education, your mind is chaotic,—it cannot even direct your future course. It points nowhere to hope, but everywhere to despair; it tells you but one thing plainly,—that you are utterly helpless.

Yet, you are still young, still beautiful. You do not want to die; you shrink from the thought with terror, as a child shrinks from the dreadful Unknown. And to live, you must have shelter: you take the first one offered,—you live a life of tinselled gaiety until you gain courage to die, or, until you become so encrusted with misery that it takes the aspect of wickedness.

But in reality you are not a depraved woman; you have a nature which shrinks from your surroundings,



and which, were a shadow of hope or help presented, you would gladly escape. Were your country like some other countries—older and wiser ones—you would not be where you are, forced into perpetual ignominy. You would be enabled to live even after committing one fault. You would find employment, you would receive respect in proportion to conduct, you would still have the blessed hope of a home and happiness to cheer you in your hours of toil. But you are ignorant: you know nothing of other countries and their customs, but think the world about you is all. Only when it is too late—when the strength of youth and hope have been exhausted—do you come to some realization of the utter absurdity and injustice of many social laws. There are many now looking at you and your class with feelings of profound pity and sympathy; but until reason shall become far more general, more humane in its judgments than it now is, your sex must suffer untold woes.

Another type of woman is the one who has more passion than reason, more will than conscience, more opportunities than barriers in her position. Does it import whether she be queen or subject? whether in society or beyond its pale? whether rich or poor? whether beautiful in form and feature? or whether enticing and voluptuous without the personal beauty? No, it matters not what the external aspects are—it is at the passionate woman we wish to glance.

You felt your destiny in very girlhood, for without the least effort on your part you attracted men to your side and made them your captives. You knew the effects of power before you knew its source. Now you

know both,—you like them and mean to keep them up to the latest period possible. You are a sovereign in the realm of Love, and you feel yourself the peer of any other potentate the earth holds. Can we think it strange that you like power, that you count your conquests as a general counts his battles? or, that you revel in the fame which is the certain attendant of success? No, we do not wonder at this; we—all of us who are not sufferers through your caprices or triumphs—deem it perfectly natural that you should take all you can get.

Why not? You are seducing, you are unscrupulous, you are reckless. There is a fund of animal spirits in you which finds a vent in prodigality, in adventures, in notoriety,—in all those things we like to read of and hear of when at a safe distance from their consequences. Were you our mother, sister, wife, friend, we should be, doubtless, less entertained by your episodes. We are all alike human in the sense of liking excitement, but none can live long without finding out that everything has two sides, two faces, two results; that, consequently, even pleasure often produces pain.

You, for instance, Queen of Love, you count your vassals by the score; your days abound with adoration, with incense, with passionate homage; you arouse envy in the breasts of many other women who, perhaps, would esteem themselves fortunate if they had but one of your many worshippers.

And yet, and yet,—there is another side to your brilliant career, O Queen! Even you are made to feel that all things will not work to your wishes. Sovereign as you are, you must needs bear all the conditions of your lofty position. Your throne is no more

permanent than other thrones. You have rivals, enemies, risks, and perils to face. You are environed by those who would not hesitate to destroy you whenever it shall suit their own interests so to do. They watch keenly your every imprudence, your every folly, and what they cannot do openly they do by intrigue, by lying, by calumny.

Moreover, your allurements are on the wane. A Ninon has indeed perpetual youth,—but, you are not of that calibre. You have neither wit nor fancy, neither goodness nor esthetic tastes. Perhaps, the day has gone by when such qualities would be appreciated by your subjects; for, although passions are the same, custom and opinion do not permit scholars and knights to throng your gates. Your mind is not one of liberal culture. It reasons feebly, sees but one or two phases of life, knows nothing beyond your own court circle.

As for your heart, its pulsations are shared among too many claimants to yield you the slightest sensation of the mystery you preside over. You have banqueted so often and amid so great a profusion, that you have no longer any appreciation of either the delicate flowers of sentiment or of the red wine of passion. In truth, to Love, as other women know it, you are utterly insensible: at best, you experience only freaks, these but ephemeral.

With every year's advance, then, you lose a portion of your kingdom. You know it and grow more imperious through the very chagrin of that realization. But nothing saves you. Your throne has no foundation beyond the fleeting homage granted to youthful fire, graceful coquetry, and daring inconsequence. Your

dethronement comes apace at the hands of Nemesis. In your old age you are kingdomless, homeless, friendless—worse than all—soulless.

“Shameful conduct! Any woman can be strong if she chooses!” So speaks the immaculate matron who personates respectability: and so echoes the staid spinster who thinks of passion as synonymous with laxity of principle.

But, dear women of character, tell me how do you know “Any woman can be strong”? Have you studied the records of human nature? Or, do you, as I fear you do, acquire your ideas from a narrow code, framed by narrow minds and passionless temperaments? Is it just to judge other women’s temptations by those that come to ourselves? Assuredly, Nature must mean something by making us so different one from the other: and there can be no want of charity and kindness if we are quick to believe that every one does her best in her place with her temperament and training.

## IX.

### LIARS, THIEVES, AND THE LIKE.

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BEFORE me, in a tiny vase, is a sprig of Cape Jasmine, a single creamy-white flower surrounded by six long, slender leaves. It sets forth a feast of fragrance and beauty so delicious that I wish others present to participate. Yet, the flower is not perfect. One side is full-blown, the other stunted, the leaves closely folded, as if shrinking from light and publicity. Can any one explain why this flower, so well developed on one side—every leaf thick, firm, spotless—should, by some occult agency, be dwarfed on the other side? This, too, when the entire stalk seems unusually strong, the leaves of vivid green and wondrous polish?

So in human character, imperfect growth is found often in the noblest specimens. In one it is a physical deformity; in another a mental flaw; in another a moral weakness. Rarely indeed is there either the threefold endowment or the threefold development imagination fondly dwells upon as possible. And in looking for causes of a seeming unskilfulness in Nature, we find the key to many of them in psychology. From this we deduce that the question, Why are men liars, thieves, murderers? may be answered as satisfactorily as the question, Why are men truthful, honest, philanthropic?

To refuse to recognize the principle personified by the familiar term "Devil" is to deny the evidence of our senses, of our reasoning faculties, of our convictions. Were there no clear distinctions between good and evil, there could be no law, no order, no safety, no possibility of any of the advantages attributed to civilization. To learn these distinctions, to examine their causes and effects, is to become competent to judge human actions fairly and charitably. To deem this subject not worth studying, or to avoid it because its revelations are painful or repulsive, is to render ourselves incompetent as members of society, and irresponsible in our special sphere. To "give the Devil his due" is to acknowledge the existence of intemperance, depravity, cruelty, and a legion of kindred facts.

Crime admitted as inseparable from humanity, we are led to methods of prevention, amelioration, and punishment. Incipient criminals are to be seen in every nursery where reason and training are lacking. Every home not subject to sound moral discipline cultivates the vices which germinate human suffering. What difference between passion in a palace and passion in a hovel? Murder is the same crime wherever committed or whatever the circumstances; every member of the community is liable to suffer through its ramifications; every member is deeply interested in averting its propagation. But, until the source has become the chief object of research, the crime will flourish, spite of decapitation, the gallows, or the solitary cell.

The worst crime may be the result of a petty habit, or of a lax principle. The criminal himself is at once the deepest enigma and the most startling lesson to his race. A casual observer is surprised at finding

that a murderer can have a pleasant countenance, or a gentle manner, or that he has warm friends. But, are we not all familiar with the marvellous changes of countenance caused by various sentiments and passions? Cupidity, hatred, revenge, lust,—either of these may so change the features as to make them temporarily unrecognizable. That evil exists, that it is a part of every human being, that it is capable of restraint or development, is a truth upon which hangs all that we call virtue and vice. Extremes serve to throw us back upon general laws. Crimes are the exceptional acts of exceptional beings. They merit study as specimens of human capability when at its lowest phase.

The question which profoundly interests all men and all women is, How to induce morality? The most trivial act of a child intimates the tone of its morale. The most menial service of a dependant bears the stamp of good or evil. To realize this does not enable us to change the act, or the stamp: it merely furnishes us with power to counteract its effect. By knowing where danger lies we can take precautions to avoid it. By discovering the liar or the thief in our household, we are enabled to protect the innocent and deal justice to the guilty. We lose none of the zest of life by knowing that perils encompass us on every side. A quick comprehension of the flaws in a work of art never disqualifies us for appreciation of its beauties. So in ethical problems. Training the mind to see precisely to what degree evil affects mankind does not render it liable to morbid conditions.

Cheerfully giving "the Devil his due," we at once

find ourselves in charitable relations towards our fellow-creatures. We expect nothing from them that their individual natures do not qualify them to give. We hold them entitled to all the privileges we ourselves claim, that is :

To the cultivation of intelligence as the first of human rights.

To the free choice of religious conviction or no-conviction.

To the enjoyment of every boon compatible with morality and their neighbors' rights.

To respect and confidence in proportion to conduct.

Giving full measure of tribute to the spirit of evil, we grow discreet in our intercourse with humankind. We treat them with courtesy without giving them blind confidence ; exercise justice towards them without losing sight of charity ; manifest forbearance for folly without participating in it. We may even feel ourselves deeply injured by certain ones among them without being rendered misanthropic ; we tolerate what cannot be eradicated, and are not embittered by our tolerance.

Invalids, as a class, are a serious hindrance to the comfort of their race : yet, the exceptions are often much more delightful as companions than people of sound health. Sickness, then, as a condition of being, is not the worst of human ills : there is something behind it which produces far greater distress. This is psychological unsoundness. The psychologist and the physician stand upon common ground. Both are called upon to contend with human suffering ; both look upon the principle Healing as the stimulus to ex-



ertion ; both think their profession worth a life-study ; both reap honor in proportion to scientific research and personal character.

The Church is the world's psychological college, and ministers are its professors. The Prison is the world's psychological hospital, with turnkeys for its nurses. Soul-sick people call for infinitely greater tenderness than the bodily-sick. Until this be recognized we must expect to be inundated with crime and harassed with its devastations. Sickness causes an involuntary shudder to people in sound health. Happily, the physician is not thus affected. On the contrary, he is attracted, interested, eager to discover means of amelioration or cure. Wickedness causes a similar shudder to people morally sound but of limited understanding.

The psychologist, however, is not shocked by deformities or maladies of the soul. He sees in them clear manifestations of abnormal life : even where the direct cause of suffering is indefinable or obscure, he knows it exists. The disappointed, the unfortunate, the persecuted, the outlawed, the depraved,—all furnish him with cases of deep interest. He sees that thousands upon thousands are born into the world only to be thrust into a condition of suffering ; that, exposed to its depressing influences without means of defence, it is not strange they should grow desperate or despairing. Pity melts him at the thought of the unfathomable sadness which fills the human heart when the emptiness of externals is realized without the support afforded by psychology. Not that this prevents the sadness : but it enables men to control and endure it. It yields a peace, a gladness, a broad sympathy, a

## *LIARS, THIEVES, AND THE LIKE.*

versal tenderness; it forms a nucleus round which other attributes of life crystallize. It fortifies against the inroads of physical ills or temporal misadventures. It exceeds all other sciences in the strength it affords men in coping with Destiny.

To be a psychologist a man must have been born with clear mental faculties and keen sensibilities. He must have endured and suffered much, have penetrated human life to the very core, have drained both pleasure and pain to the dregs. He must have known indifference, ennui, disgust, no less than interest, entertainment, and attraction. He must have subjected himself to tests which alternately elated and humiliated: must have felt supremely happy and supremely miserable. He must have lived an intense inner life, in which inherited tendencies continually clashed with his intellectual and moral constitution; one which incessant revolutions of emotion finally taught him the science of self-government.

The psychologist by his very gifts is doomed to conflict—with himself, with others—and to solicitude. He is a predictor: knowing the advent of calamities, he is debarred from enjoyment of the present. Even when revelling in voluptuousness he is tormented by its transience or by premonition of its consequences. Unable him to understand the human soul, Nature endowed him with faculties at once strong and weak, hot and cold. His entity is double. He is in part an optimist and a pessimist: he sees justification in wrong as well as of right: he enters into argument with sensuality as easily as into one for asceticism. He is a creature of moods, of passions, of strangely-conflicting desires,—yet, all these are in subjection to

Reason. This fact, however, does not yield him happiness, nor does it excite the faintest degree of pride: it simply makes him what he is,—a being who from birth to death is absorbed in problems which relate to the soul.

Ancestors of multiform inclinations, of diversified training, concentrate the predominant characteristic in one descendant. Thus Nature creates a scientist, a philanthropist, a theologian, a psychologist. The general traits of the last-named are the same whether observed in India or in America. He holds human nature to be the highest school of learning, not because of its abstract truths, but because of its direct effect upon living men and women. He studies the history of nations to learn traits of character common to individuals. He studies individuals to discover of what nations are composed. He believes that the term Fate is synonymous with Destiny, with Nature, with Providence, with a number of other words representing the unseen force which sways human lives from beginning to end. To ignore this fact is, he thinks, to shut his eyes to truths more tangible than any in physical science. Fate is represented to every mortal by what he has—or has not—through inheritance, through surroundings, through influences.

There is a touching story of a convict dying in an English prison after a forty-six years' incarceration. His daughter stated that he did not complain of the fare or treatment, but of the deprivation of books. His life might have been spared if he had been permitted to have books of history or geography. "He had nothing," she said, "but a Bible, a Prayer-Book,

and tracts to read, and he knew them by heart." Poor man! Poor daughter! And this in the nineteenth century, in a *civilized Christian* country! Torture in our prisons is not yet abolished: the appliances only are changed. Instead of being used to dislocate the limbs and joints of the body, they are devised to tear the feelings and craze the brain. Alas for humanity, when we refuse to see Man in the criminal!

With rare exceptions, men are wretched without their comforts, their privileges, their associations. Glancing at those immediately under our notice, it is appalling to think what A. would be without his business, his wealth: B. without his snug home, industrious wife, and pretty children: C. without her household cares: D. without her dress, her visiting, her gossip! Who would wish to deprive men of even their most miserable props?

Were Fate awarded its fitting place, there could be no judges of humanity, only helpers and pitiers.

Some men are born honest, industrious, self-poised: they live quiet lives, finding fault neither with others nor with themselves. They accept the religion of their country as they do its laws, without comment, without reflection. They make good citizens, good husbands, good fathers.

Some men are born dishonest, lazy, erratic: they live turbulent lives, clamoring for others' gifts, and, when denied, stealing them or vilifying their possessors. They refuse not only religion, but what is far more important—morality. They acknowledge no law save self-interest and passion. They make bad citizens, bad husbands, bad fathers: they diffuse endless deso-

lation in the community, require incessant vigilance, and fill the prisons.

One of the most curious phases of human nature is the tendency to cry out against weaknesses or crimes as if they were inhuman—in the sense of abnormal or unnatural.

Liars—for instance,—are there none in the world save those who are directly accused of the fact? Surely, we cannot look far without perceiving that many who throw up their hands in horror upon confronting a liar, are yet daily living out the self-same principle. It seems to be a matter of kind and degree more than an actual difference of nature which creates shame and disgrace as to certain frailties.

Strictly speaking—from a purely moral standpoint—liars are to be found in every community, in every class: the modes of expression vary in accordance with character and occasion. Who is not familiar with the pleasant lies of society that fall so glibly from the most truth-loving people! And who thinks of resenting them, unless they clash with our self-love or our interests!

To be told by acquaintances that we look well—even when aware that we look ill—is not disagreeable. Or, to be told, in accents of conviction, that we do certain things skilfully, when we know it is mere bungling; that we give pleasure by our presence, when we are absolutely certain that we are creating discomfort; that we are peculiarly “sensitive,” when other language would make it peculiarly “ill-tempered;” that our Christian graces are admirable, when we feel their source to be simply spiritual pride,—these

and similar lies are, it must be admitted, both pleasant and useful.

Society lies are, besides, not necessarily spoken ones. They come often in the form of a gesture, a smile, a frown, an act of courtesy, a mental reserve. In fact, the varieties in kind and color are so numerous, so habitual, so much a part of manner, voice, and actions, that by common consent they are not called lies at all. Nor is this sort of lying confined, as some narrow-minded people think, to society in its technical meaning. On the contrary, it is no less frequently found in the circles called Religious, Commercial, Judicial, and Domestic. Indeed, the capability and facility of lying, exhibited in all classes and organizations, open curious speculations as to the elasticity of even our best faculties. Every country has a certain standard of what is termed "honor," a something by which every class agrees to abide or else suffer the penalty of violation. Doubtless, it would be impossible for any association to exist without some such code; but those who look beyond the letter of things cannot avoid perceiving that the spirit of lying is the same in one place and in one person as in another.

Thieves seem, at first sight, to be less numerous than liars. But, upon penetrating external forms and compromises, we find the propensity which makes those troublesome members of society, in many high and unexpected places. Under various names, thieves are scattered throughout every community, and even with all the precautions furnished by education, law, and religion, we are liable, at any moment, to be exposed to their depredations. From the thief who seizes a loaf of bread or a coat, to the one who appro-

priates thousands of dollars or a book full of ideas, are seen all the grades that human nature and civilized society combined can furnish.

If, then, it be granted that the germ of thieving—like that of lying—exists in human nature, it will be recognized as merely one truth of the broad doctrine Humanity. All men have in them the possibilities of goodness and wickedness: as individuals, they have more of one or more of the other, opportunities of development or means of repression. To guard ourselves against thieves is as necessary, as to guard ourselves against pestilence. Yet in neither case can legislation do more than punish the overt act or provide sanitary measures. It cannot root out a single evil desire, cannot annihilate noxious vapors.

If we glance at the people we somewhat vaguely designate "our friends," and note their respective tendencies, we cannot but be thankful for the wisdom which makes not only stringent laws for criminals, but likewise those barriers called custom, opinion, and morality. And what others of our class and training are capable of, we ourselves are of course not exempt from. As human beings we may well feel and express gratitude, not for being better than others are, but for being withheld by combined endowment and hindrances from being worse than we are. Even as it is, the so-called "good" among us have but small reason for pride or self-complacency. Can we not easily imagine the array of selfish qualities and ungenerous actions that would quickly come to light, were the restrictions now upon us removed? Indeed, nothing is more forcibly impressed upon us than that life would speedily become wholly unendurable were there no

checks to most of our impulses and inclinations. Where one poet would forego everything ignoble for the sake of esthetic principle, a thousand utilitarians would boldly usurp human rights. Or, where one philanthropist would labor for the race, a horde of barbarians would unscrupulously appropriate both the bodies and the souls of their cotemporaries.

Liars, thieves, and the like,—what truth in Nature do they set forth? How are they to be regarded by their fellow-citizens? What shall be our own relations—mental and moral—with them? At the very outset it may be as well to fix our minds upon the fact that they form an important class in society, and that they can never—as a class—be either changed or exterminated. They always have been, always will be. It is a belief which some repudiate, but which would be as impossible to disprove as that bad seed could produce good fruit.

The existence of an evil acknowledged, the next step is to devise means of controlling or counteracting it. Here is the point where all of us are interested—selfishly or unselfishly—and where the best we have in us may find full employment. Not that many of us can, in a direct, active sense, be philanthropists: for that, special faculties and training are requisite. But, in turning the best of our own endowments and opportunities into a channel which may help others, we are virtually solving the problem of crime and criminals. Do we ever hear of wise men being surprised that crime should exist, that its manifestations are frequent and repulsive? And this equanimity is not the result of apathy or of immorality: it is simply because of



wisdom. Knowing what human nature is, they are not astonished at even its worst phases. They do not rail against mankind because thieves and murderers exist in every community; but, they hold such specimens of mankind as inseparable from communities, as much and as natural a part of them as honest and virtuous men are.

Yet, while admitting incontestable facts, such men do not stultify their intelligence by advocating license to criminals for the indulgence of their propensities. Quiet, inoffensive, industrious people are to be protected, to be allowed room for the spread of their virtues, for the enjoyment of their firesides. With this beneficent object Law and Force are instituted. To imagine a community without such aids is to imagine reckless depredation and persecution, all the evils and horrors of anarchy. If we see that laws and punishments are not perfectly equitable, not likely to meet a given exigency, we see only the imperfection that exists in every part of humanity. The most and the best a mortal can do is to help—through his own probity and fidelity—the imperfection he perceives. As to the mode he adopts—whether by Law, Church, Philanthropy, or Philosophy—this is of slight consequence compared to the principles that animate his endeavors.

## X.

### CONFIDANTS.

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THE people we meet daily in our households, in our business, in our pleasures, constitute a world that requires us to do certain things. Not that its orders are always given in peremptory language ; but they are nevertheless so emphatically pronounced, so cunningly adapted to our position and capability, that misapprehension is impossible, and disobedience very impolitic. Now, as a rule, this world referred to is not overstocked with either physical strength or philosophical principles : consequently, the human traits in it are apt to become troublesome. It has curiosity ; it wants to be amused, stimulated ; it wants to profit by others' industry and energy. So that, if we good-naturedly incline to minister to these wants, we can do so by confiding all that we know—of ourselves and of others—into this world's ear. But, before we do so, we shall do well to consider, how far our condescension may prove beneficial or mischievous.

Over-reserve may bring us cold looks, unjust criticism, unkind judgment. But, over-confidence is sure to bring us much worse things, and so many of them that we shrink from enumeration. By all means let the world have from us its rightful claims, but this

without making it our confessor. If we do so, we violate one of the first laws of self-preservation: it destroys our freedom through the privileges it gives intruders, meddlers, vagrants. Granted that we know enough about the human nature in us to make us modest, humble; that we see certain blemishes and defects which can never be eradicated. Yet, laying these bare to the world they acquire so exaggerated a form that we ourselves no longer recognize them: we lose self-confidence, grow disheartened.

Many of us, even when principled against it, fall into this error: doing so, we bring about very disagreeable results. We are misunderstood, ridiculed, persecuted. Casual remarks are taken as fixed principles; embryo theories are stamped as perfected experiences; visionary hopes are seized as contraband realities; passionate desires are transformed into reckless excesses; pictures of Imagination are hung upon walls of Fact and ingenuous spectators made to accept the illusion; refinement of conduct is interpreted into fastidiousness; sensitiveness into irritability; self-respect into pride; enthusiasm into ambition; natural reserve into wilful exclusiveness; warm sympathy for others into sentimental folly. Endless the list which should give in full the means of persecution which frankness towards the world generates!

To escape such a hindrance to a normal life every legitimate means may be made available. If the world receive from us our daily tributes of conformity in dress, manner, action, what more does it need? Why tell it of our disappointments, of our strifes, of our moral errors, of our painful humiliations? To live calmly amid tumult; to work steadily with pleasure

at our elbow ; to keep our eyes upon beauty while our feet are torn by rough stones and sharp thorns ; to realize that age and infirmity are ahead, while we feel the hot blood of youth coursing through our veins,—these things are not easy. Yet all of us are required to make some attempt towards their attainment ; and to confide in the world, renders those things far more difficult to pursue, far more difficult to seize. The questions it cannot comprehend, it treats with flippancy ; the aims which interfere with its projects are pronounced idealistic ; the teachings which lessen the number of its votaries are combated with stormy partisanship and reckless harangue.

Frankness between equals is as natural as affection, as sympathy, as any of those results which arise from reciprocity of sentiment. Frankness towards those either above or below us is unnatural and productive of mischief. In the first instance, we awaken pity or contempt : in the second, we put weapons into the hands of those who use them against us.

All who are not our equals in intellect stand to us in the relation of children. To confide weighty opinions or heart-searchings to children, is to make them needlessly uncomfortable and render them liable at any moment to injure ourselves. We can associate with children and find it the most agreeable of relaxations : but, to tell them of our life-discipline is to awaken their distrust and suspicion. Who would commit the egregious mistake of confiding his inner self to any human being save under two conditions,—soul-relationship and equal culture ? The temptation, undoubtedly, is a strong, ever-present one. It seems to lessen the load we bear to speak of it to others ; we

crave sympathy, and are not always prudent or scrupulous in our manner of seeking it.

“There is scarcely any man,” says Southey, “with whom the whole of my being comes in contact; and thus with different people I exist another and yet the same. With ——, for instance, the school-boy feelings revive; I have no other association with him. With some I am the moral and intellectual agent; with others I partake the daily and hourly occurrences of life.” Every one of deep feeling experiences similar differences.

Standing just where you are and looking at social life, imagine the consequences of indiscriminate frankness. What extraordinary revelations would ensue! What commotions in public and private circles! What instant rending of domestic ties, of friendly relations! Confusion and misery would be increased a hundred-fold through that one fact. Fortunately, there are restraints upon confiding people. Affection, courtesy, charity, reason,—these prevent the full expression of thought and feeling, and thus preserve the equilibrium of society.

Were you—and you—and you—these singled out from among my friends and enemies—to make the world your confidant, could you not give some very singular, perhaps some rather startling facts? I am quite positive you could. But of what use? None whatever, save to bring upon yourself staring eyes, venomous tongues, painful misconstruction. You are right, then, in withholding your confidences. Life is by no means a simple affair: it is full of contradictions and perplexities, so full that the wisest among us

make no profession of understanding it. Yet neither you nor I need hold ourselves responsible for the impressions life makes upon us: they are made,—that is all we know.

Suppose it be an inherited trait—say pride—you have to contend with. Would it help you at all to tell the world just how it worries and harasses your days? No—it would only hinder your attempts to subdue or counteract its force. You felt it working in your nature long before you named it. Then, when recognized, it was a spirit of dark, forbidding aspect, always ready with hateful whisperings to mar a pleasant hour. It mingled continually with your pursuits, causing that unrest which brings forth dissatisfaction with what is, longing for what is not and cannot be. The peculiar circumstances of your career, you knew, were decreed long before you saw the light; no prayers, no tears, no resistance, could avert the sentence thus entailed. You bowed before the inevitable, but submission does not preclude suffering. Then came hours when you thought the spirit's power broken, yourself secure for the remainder of life. Fatuous hope! When is man ever secure from passion? As an inheritance you may see the flaw and deplore its blighting effect, while utterly unable to eradicate the cause. Aware of its continual presence, you do at times contrive to elude its subtle methods of attack: but nothing can prevent the occasional paroxysm which prostrates you beneath self-respect and leaves you writhing in the dust. That over, there comes a reaction in the form of self-reproach, one that sweeps over the soul like a whirlwind, forcing from it the cry,

Avaunt, Pride! Gross, earth-born, moved only by unworthy aims, thou art justly abhorred by me! Yet, you cannot do battle with such a spirit—again and again you have come out of the conflict worsted. But this you can, and so help you heaven will do—you will fill your soul with so noble a purpose that everything base must flee from its presence. Moreover, you can draw from it—from that spirit—the magic which skills you in fathoming other human beings likewise in the thrall of Fate. To other hearts you can say, as to your own :

Suffer, bend, but do not break! It will pass, this fiery ordeal,—you will again know peace and tranquillity. You cannot escape the risks to which your nature exposes you. Not one can be spared from the ranks of this struggling, toiling army called Humanity. Should you be in your place, see what you see, be what you are, were there naught for you to do? Perhaps, by the law of sympathy, you find solace in the thought that whatever you endure—by inheritance or otherwise—is, in varied forms, endured by other mortals.

Passions of different kinds are in effects very similar. If not pride, it may be love, hate, jealousy, or a hot temper that gives you a life-work of contention. And it is not of necessity an inherited trait, but just as liable to be one acquired through your own laxity of will or conscience. You may have natural mental abilities of unusual force, while actually you are frittering them away in idle amusements. You are, possibly, not bad-hearted by endowment, but through habitual falsity to your higher self you give daily evidence to those about you of very ugly feelings,

very cruel intentions. In short, you may be anything in character expressed by the words good and bad—or anything between those two extremes—and yet be under no obligation to tell the world how it came to be.

With one kind of person only is it safe to be frank,—with the student of human nature. He alone arrives at any fair estimation of man as he is, of woman as she is. He takes delight in the very diversity of character which to non-students seems so disagreeably perplexing. He analyzes not from curiosity, but from an earnest desire to attain a practical result. The experiences which make a master in science are not always pleasing to the senses or feelings. He must mingle freely with all manner of people, submit to puerile customs, live a life of enforced conformity, before learning the truths which are to serve his purpose. Here then—in this student's ear—you may be as confiding as you please, and cause no misapprehension. You might say: I have long since given up the enigma called life, and am capable of enthusiasm in two directions only—work and love. My brain supplies me with the first. The second is represented by a living human being whom the world calls ——. I call her by so many and such extravagant titles that it seems prudent not to give them sound or form. Enough that I know them and that to me they personate the best gift of existence. With this reality to brood over, dream upon, rest my soul in, I am in a state of content which no earthly change can ruffle. As for what men call “death,” “the next state,” “heaven,” “hell”—these possess no interest whatever for me. I deem them unworthy of a thinker's



consideration. Once I pondered, speculated, crazed my brain in the vain endeavor to know the Unknowable. Theology, Materialism, Spiritualism, Science,—all were in turn consulted and renounced as teachers; all were finally rejected as inefficient, unreliable. They instructed me to their utmost ability: having served their purpose they were set aside as useless. The few facts which reason accepts, and which enable this machine called Body and Soul to perform its functions, are soon named: Eat, Drink, Sleep, Work, Love. With these incorporated into my being as the sole aim of the remaining years of existence on this planet, I look with amazement at the multiform occupations and vexations of my fellow-creatures. Like a lover writing to a long-sought and just-found mistress, I exclaim:

How comes it that, after being the butt of Fortune during so many years, after sounding the capacity of divers pursuits and finding all alike futile for the absorption of vitality,—how comes it, I say, that you should have been found and given into my possession? Explain it,—this event, this accident, this unreal reality, this miracle, this something wholly unlike any other thing Nature ever deigned to give me.

The above is but a mood of one mortal's mind: in another mood he might express convictions or impressions widely different. If man, then, be so changeable, so impressionable, so prone to be swayed by imagination, of what avail that he should make a confidant of a world which, for the most part, is quick to judge from the barest shreds of thought or action! No! let him rather say with Voltaire:

“*Résignons-nous à la destinée qui se moque de*

nous et qui nous emporte; vivons tant que nous pourrons : nous ne serons jamais aussi heureux que les sots ; mais tâchons de l'être à notre manière. . . .

“Le plus grand bien auquel on puisse prétendre est de mener une vie conforme à son état et à son goût. Quand on est venu là, on n'a point à se plaindre, et il faut souffrir ses coliques patiemment.”

In a child, a confiding disposition is one of its most attractive traits; when this is missing, the condition seems un-childlike, to a certain extent repulsive. The child who most strongly appeals to our sympathies is he who greets every new day and event with fearless confidence. Bright, buoyant, happy in ignorance, he enjoys the present because unalloyed with experience. Yet if a child be non-confiding there must be good cause. Perhaps he has a feeling of duty associated with the word “confide,” while at the same time the very one towards whom he should naturally turn in moments of embarrassment has a manner which effectually checks confidence. Rather than open his heart there he would forego his wishes, or endure pain in silence. But the frankness vainly demanded by a usurper is spontaneously given to the rightful claimant: even in children, the soul of strong fibre rebels utterly against coercion, while it yields rejoicingly to its companion-soul.

So with people. Because your neighbors, in a tone of modified dislike, call you “so very reserved,” you are not, by that verdict, made actually unsocial: your humanity makes that impossible. True, you cannot unbend before a dissimilar temperament: you are happier in an ideal companionship than when with

associates to whom you dare not show your real self. Something in your temperament warns you against misplaced confidences; and if, as occasionally happens, you disregard the warning, you are punished by the consequences of laxity of tongue. But, put you in a congenial atmosphere, and instantly your reserve dissolves. You do not care then whether you are beautiful or ugly, graceful or awkward, distinguished or obscure. You feel your personality—whatever its grade—without being abashed by it: you are willing others should see it, and are not disturbed by their judgment of its quality.

Reserved people have greater need than any others for a confidant, but it must be one fitly chosen, one who will understand and console and help. Perhaps only you who belong to this class can rightly understand them. You, at least, know that they are not as cold, as unloving, as they appear; that there is, somewhere deep down in their natures, that which would gladly respond to the fitting summons. To many it never comes—that summons: at least, must you not so infer from the listless manner and hopeless faces you see about you? You feel like dealing very tenderly with such lonely natures, debarred as they are through mental constitution, or through personal error, from social good will. You are not surprised that they become indifferent to externals, that their tempers are morose, their voices harsh, their features set in discontent. Can nothing help them? nothing change their condition? Yes—you think something might; but it is a remedy very difficult to obtain. It is called *Know Yourself*.

## XI.

### ERRATIC PEOPLE.

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THE vagabond temperament subjected to the restraints of civilized life produces some very curious results. It makes a cross between sober unpossessed respectability and the actual madness of poets, artists, and lovers. The people thus affected are called "erratic," "queer," "original," "eccentric," "crazy," the special signification of those terms being dependent upon the speaker's understanding. These people are, in spirit, many degrees above conventionality, but in action just as many degrees above vagrancy.

This midway position makes them look at both sides too often for their own comfort: it weakens the power of choice. They believe in law and order for the community, hence dare not refuse their own moiety of conformity. They advocate individual freedom, yet fully recognize the risks attendant upon temperament and opportunity. This makes them bold in thought, but conservative in action. While feeling keenly, they simulate indifference: while protesting against conventionality, they yield to its pressure. They like the ease and comfort of domestic life, but shrink from its cares, are fretted by its regulations. While craving adventures—everything opposed to formality—they are

either too indolent to seek them or too timid to act a part in them. Their inner life is strongly marked, while their external one is feebly outlined, faintly colored.

Repression of self seems to be their central principle, yet, acting upon it, they feel as if defrauded. They are provokingly inconsistent. They excite curiosity without gratifying it; seem always to promise more than they give forth; fire enthusiasm, but run away from the explosion. They feel themselves capable of being very much or very little of almost anything in any direction. They alternate between preciseness and carelessness, between earnestness and frivolity; are at one time over-scrupulous, and at another verge on recklessness.

They are struggling between two powerful forces—temperament and conventionality. They are in the position of one to whom all the fruits of the season are proffered in the hour when he desires only bread or water. When to others they seem most inexcusable, most enigmatical, to themselves the causes are most justifiable, most explicable. They often feel like Shirley when she says, "Not my *private* conscience, you must understand, but my landed-proprietor-and-lord-of-the-manor conscience."

So these erratic people act in one hour upon their vagabond-temperament conscience, and in the next, upon their respectable-position-and-expedient-conventional conscience. Living in a century which respects certain rules as emblematic of intelligence, of taste, of morality—almost of sanity—and unwilling to shake popular belief in their orthodox civilization, they think it well to devote some portion of vitality to consulting the notions of said century.

The vagabond temperament is a demon which can never be wholly exorcised. At best it can only be fettered: even then the clanking links, the flashing eye and excited tones of the prisoner betray his impatient, unruly nature. And the closest guard cannot prevent it from occasionally breaking its bonds and working its will.

That this demon should wage perpetual warfare with conventionality, is inevitable. Sometimes there is victory on one side, sometimes on the other; but, as in all kinds of warfare, the great issues are often lost sight of in the multitude of petty personal ambitions and jealousies that exhaust human strength. Becoming partisans, we are wholly incapacitated for either clear judgment or lofty enthusiasm. Those only who see both sides without participating in the fray, are found competent to see the identical mingling of good and bad that is everywhere perceptible.

Forms are indispensable to organization: they give punctuality, method, strength, durability. Society calls its forms by the general term conventionality. This prescribes how much or how little shall be given to every individual. It decides questions of dress, of occupation, of amusement; deals forth permission or prohibition as to our companions; relieves us of all responsibility in those nebulous regions called religion, sentiment, and passion. Right and wrong, happiness and unhappiness, are not, under its régime, permitted discussion. They are to be accepted in an appointed form, or not at all.

Sober, unpossessed people constitute the bulwark of conventionality. They are usually well-clad, well-behaved, easy-going mortals. They never ask trouble-

some questions, never want to do things out of place or season: they are never wearied by respectability. They conform to any law or custom which happens to be in vogue, do it as easily as if born for that very purpose,—which, doubtless, they were. They are respectable: they know it, and nod contentedly over the fact. They could not live either comfortably or religiously without it: they could not die easily or peacefully without it. They smile benignly upon all who belong to their ranks, but frown grimly upon all who doubt or resist their authority.

In domestic life respectability takes the aspect of a methodical, well-regulated family, where duties are doled out to young and old irrespective of personal tastes or wishes. In public life respectability is personated by manners and principles carefully adapted to the popular demand. Its votaries seek above all else to avoid clashing with things that are, and hold innovation as hazardous to prosperity. In one sense they are right.

Respectability is a good thing; in its best definition it is civilization itself. And who can doubt that this, with all its undercurrents of sham, hypocrisy, and corruption, is yet the best thing humanity has found! To be discontented with it is to find fault with life—a great mistake: the fault, if anywhere, is in ourselves. Yet, because respectability is good, we need not call all other things bad.

A man of erratic temperament does not on that account want to break away from reasonable usages and do wild and wicked things. He wishes simply to live a natural rather than an artificial life; but, this wishing does not necessarily bring it about. Suppose he have

that temperament combined with a weak will. Circumstances—not choice—have put him into a distasteful business career; but, seeing the difficulties environing other men in other pursuits, he does not complain. But, in addition, there is a barrier to content which can neither be overcome nor removed. He is married to a woman of conservative temperament and a strong will.

Respectability, to her understanding, means, having everything that everybody else has: and this principle, acted upon by her will, makes her influence an irresistible force in the family. Under it, her husband devotes himself to business, not only to acquire a maintenance, but a fortune: nothing less than that will satisfy the wants of such a wife and a family bred under such a mother. Business, then, to this man becomes a toil by day and by night; for, to one whose entire energies are bent upon accumulating money, the setting sun fails to bring any sense of repose. Care, anxiety, and apprehension are the thorns which penetrate the softest pillow when a man's goal is material wealth. He sacrifices health, mind, feeling, the best of himself as man, for "his family": so he says, so others like him say.

If a man have absolutely no thoughts, tastes, or feelings beyond his business, he is right in merging his whole being there. Being honest in that absorption, we can respect him; and, what is better, he will respect himself. But this man has tastes of a marked intellectual character. With development they would carry him, if not to fame, at least to a very high grade of happiness. He feels this incessantly amid all the hours of toil and anxiety; and,



feeling it, cannot be at peace with himself or with others.

Yet, what to do? Wife and children are not like himself; they are not satisfied with the necessities of life merely, but want all the luxuries they see around them. They are unreasoning and unreasonable; they clamor until the husband and father gives up his own tastes to the vain delusion of making them happy. But this giving up brings no success, because his occupation is mechanical instead of hearty. His nature is ill adapted for business: yet in no other way can he procure the means for maintaining in due state the household god, Respectability.

Can a man living thus be cheerful, buoyant? Can he know any of the best things of existence when thoughts are repressed, feelings smothered? Impossible! Whatever his manner—for cheerfulness can be assumed—he himself is not the man he would and might be. The money earned and spent brings him no satisfaction; for the first is at cost of his soul-vitality, and the second is wholly against his personal convictions of use or taste. At middle-age he is dispirited. He has not acquired a fortune, his temperament disqualified him for that; finally, he has no hope of change, for, wife and children bind him down to the position he long ago weakly accepted.

Is it to be wondered at if, under this chafing, temperament lead him into habits and ways which, while offering a temporary relaxation from the strain of respectability-worship, yet gradually wreck his character and his home? Men are not what they might be—not invulnerable—not perfect; and the best among them never profess to be. But, in summing up their

deeds or misdeeds, women may justly check their reproaches and denunciations with the reflection: In what respect—as human beings—are we better? In not one: would be the candid, truthful answer of the best of their sex. To make any other, would be to accuse Nature of partiality in the creation of one of her noblest works—a manifest absurdity.

If men of vagabond temperament marry young, their chances are nine to one of unhappiness. For in that proportion only may it be reasonably expected to find the kind of mind which would make congeniality of character the basis of choice in a life-companion. The other nine would not choose at all, but would fall into matrimony through a passing fancy, through conventional motives, through sheer thoughtlessness.

Another kind of erratic man, one of strong will, offers a very different illustration. He rules the family, instead of being ruled by it; his judgment decides in what degree respectability shall become the household altar. He is not a sluggard in his business or profession, but he takes recreation as well, deeming it indeed an essential of true life. He reaches middle-age under a full realization of the value of existence for himself and for others.

His mind has not been thrust into a corner to rust, but kept bright and active with daily culture. His feelings have not been denied their rights, but nourished with affections and kindly offices. If his temperament be, as he acknowledges, an obstacle to some kinds of success, it is nevertheless replete with indemnifications. It brings him more of the real treasures of life in one year than come to other men, of other temperament, in a score of years.

His wife and children, although not erratic, have caught enough of his spirit to understand his wishes and to be guided by them. And this without any sense of servility, for their own happiness is insensibly but surely enhanced by the atmosphere of content pervading the home. When no spurious principle is at the foundation, there are few women and children who cannot be happy with moderate circumstances. When they crave the show and glitter of fashion, it is usually because they are not provided with other things to fill up the vacuum of idleness.

Upon women, respectability has a much more powerful effect than upon men. A woman of conservative temperament, born to a fixed position, say in middle life, has little chance of knowing either herself or the world. Her home is one of average comfort. As a child she is fed, clothed, taught, amused: during girlhood these things are continued with more or less strictness or indulgence. She follows routine partly because it is her nature, partly because she has never heard of anything else. She is respectable as a matter of course, without any effort: neither her mind nor her temperament can conceive of a different career.

There are multitudes of such women, and, while their limited experiences make them rather monotonous as companions, we are all ready to grant their wide usefulness to society. Indeed, we can hardly think of an average comfortable home without instantly associating at least one of such women in some way connected with its management. But Nature has a profound dislike to repetition. Her human work, especially, is full of variety, so that after

studying all types we seem to discover just as many new ones.

So among women in middle life are found many specimens of vagabond temperament. Here is one who performs in the usual drama of Respectability without learning to like it. Even as a child she resists forms and methods: in dress, in manner, in intercourse with people, in education, she is perpetually at variance with custom. But when she rebels openly she is made to suffer for her temerity. She is called hard names, is frowned upon, is rebuked, is told, in every variation of tone and manner, that she is "too queer for anything."

Womanhood reached, she misses its best benefits because of the onerous duties of young-ladyhood. Once she had looked forward to being "grown up" as a period of release from irksome restraints: but they are no less severe, the names only are changed. To have everything and yet nothing, to be in company and yet painfully lonely, to be playing a part when she would fain be natural,—this is her lot. With head and heart full, she is expected to act as if both were empty.

If her will were strong she would refuse to do the distasteful things daily required of her. But, with her repugnance to those things, is that odd mingling of conscientiousness and fear which makes the attribute called compliance. She represses manifestations of dislike and forces herself to obey other people's opinions and whims. She acts upon the essentially feminine logic that every one else's rights are more to be looked after than her own.

True, such words would fall strangely upon some

of the ears around her, those who, not understanding the vagabond temperament, coldly pronounce her "selfishly exclusive." Not a pleasant sensation this—to be considered something ugly and heartless, considered so by perhaps the nearest of kin—but it comes and must be borne, patiently or otherwise. What if she know that it is only a semblance of selfishness, that in reality her nature is not made of such villainous stuff! Her knowing cannot make others know: nothing remains but involuntarily to give annoyance, to give offence, and take the painful consequences.

Yet, this is not done without conflicts severe and long-continued. The perplexing questions, How far shall I yield to natural wishes? to feelings? How much conform to opinion? to custom? are continually coming up, and as often dismissed without satisfactory answers. By day and by night she wrestles with the contradictions around her and the possibilities suggested by reason. With her profound admiration for individuality in other characters, her own weak submission to guidance is a matter for wonderment—even to herself. Why live thus in a tame, mechanical subservience to customs which instinct and reason alike reject? And to make it worse, there are hours when she feels herself growing accustomed to servitude and its deteriorating influences.

If you are a woman of this type, you for a long time looked at the world from the conventional side only: but, this while always believing in and expecting something better, for your nature was not one to be easily moulded. How is it now with you? What did the aforesaid "believing" and "expecting" bring to

you? Did its promises of "better" see fruition? That dear conventional world you know so well, what do you think of it now, looked at from several different sides?

Well—you admit the good purpose it serves, you hold it as very wise, very prudent, very useful, but—very tiresome. You are not maliciously inclined, but you owe it a grudge for cheating you out of sundry best things of life. You mean to give it in the shape of a protest—long and heart-felt—against respectability that bores. To yourself it can give little consolation, because the things conventionality took from you are not to be redeemed. But perhaps some of those now under the portals of that educational temple, may take from it courage to resist its usurpations when they threaten to engulf happiness.

Of what advantage to live in a free country if in social life we are the veriest slaves that ever breathed? Can it be that the greater portion of women in civilized countries are drawn, they hardly know how, into this or that mode of life, rarely, if ever, permitted to act upon their convictions or impulses? If for the good of the community it must so be—well, then it must—but meanwhile we cannot expect gay spirits and joyous countenances in mortals who possess the vagabond temperament.

That respectable word "Ought,"—how you hate it! Ought! Ought! Ought! All through childhood, all through girlhood, it was so dinned into your ears that even now in womanhood you cannot rid yourself of the sound. Wherever you go, whatever you do or do not do, wherever you are, you hear that eternal distracting refrain, Ought! Ought! Ought!

By that talismanic syllable you were goaded into various unsuitable positions, into countless uncongenial pursuits. It made you weary of the day long before it closed: and to make it worse, the possibility of a more natural life continually loomed up while the *bête-noire* "Ought" thrust its ugly visage between idea and reality. How you hated it!

Yet, while hating—cordially—you obeyed. Can you deny it? Or, can you oust from memory the things, the foolish things done while under that domination? Would they not furnish material for one, or more volumes if you were honest enough and brave enough to give your experiences? Perhaps you plead your woman-nature—imagined duty, fear of wounding others, shrinking from the stigma "eccentricity"—and, allowing something for that, there is still self-reproach in abundance rankling in your mind.

Ah, dear erratic woman, you cannot have the advantages of respectability without paying a price for them! Look at your toilette alone, what it costs you in time, in means, in vexation. You think you are moderate, do you?—you plead less extravagance than others of your class practise? And still, is not this so-called moderation confessedly the source of infinite annoyance to you? Are you ever so comfortable as when in that state which most of your sex would pronounce "not fit to be seen"? Not that you are slovenly—the gods forbid that fall!—but you do like to feel your body released from imprisonment, from the stiff and heavy uniform custom prescribes for women of your position.

And even the discomfort daily endured from this source, is nothing in comparison to the greater injury

sustained by the giving over of yourself to others' notions. Hours and hours, days and days, years and years devoted to making happy those who, after all, are not made happy. Is this a gratifying record, one calculated to bring agreeable sensations to a reflective mind? Candidly, are you not at times so roused to indignation by the recollection of your losses that you feel yourself capable of making daring escapades, of plunging into absolute recklessness, of becoming vagabond enough to be deemed a firebrand in conventional circles? This not without reason: Nature loves to indemnify herself for deprivation or wrong.

Probably you are not bold enough to act: you have too long been under the yoke of slavery for this. But, what you do is to imagine the things you might have by simply yielding a little here, a little there, simply saying "yes" or "no," simply looking or not looking, simply listening or shutting your ears.

By right of your vagabond temperament you delight in the unusual, in the extraordinary. You want to experiment in matters physical, intellectual, and moral. You want to try as many different modes of life as may, without absolute injury to self and others, be attempted. This not alone for the actual gratification to be found, but for positive knowledge of our common humanity.

Scientific explorers possess an unconquerable desire to arrive at certain positive conclusions, not only by means of others' statements and observations, but through their own research. So you feel concerning life human: you would be sorry to die before pursuing to the extremest limit of possibility inquiries which pertain to the race as much as to yourself.



Investigating through your own thinking faculty, testing through your own senses,—these are the adventures to which temperament impels you, into which you long to throw yourself without reserve, without fear.

Throughout most of your past you were laboring in the dark, with chains around hands and feet: now that these are partially loosened, you begin to feel the satisfaction of personal activity. Restraints are still about you; difficulties—some from without, more from within—are to be overcome; prejudices are to be rooted out, traditional opinions to be analyzed, temporary standing to be made secondary to absolute truth. Truly, much to be done before your vagabond temperament becomes reconciled to facts as they are.

Respectability in excess makes poor-rich people. It gives them comfortable homes, but prevents them from enjoying them. It furnishes opportunities of culture, but leaves no time for profiting by them. It provides a wide social circle, but a very narrow area of friendship. It shows all the bounties of intellect and affection, while laying too heavy an embargo upon them to enable them to be touched or tasted.

Swayed by this power, into what strangely inconsistent ways even so-called sensible people fall! Striving with body and soul after things they do not really need; setting aside from expediency or false shame that which really gives most nourishment; grasping at shadows with an earnestness at once painful and ludicrous,—they present a spectacle liable to awaken contempt, unless observation be balanced by philosophy.

"Respectability to support" is the bane of many strokes of genius. It is a force none the less effective for being quiet, plausible, insidious. It appeals now to our sympathy, now to our vanity, now to our pride. In one hour it prevents us from deserting by binding our faculties with the silken cords of affection; in another, by making us feel the thongs of ridicule and neglect.

Doubtless, there is none too much said against the immorality of great cities,—there can be no cessation of the war waged in that direction. Nevertheless, were all the sacrifices and miseries entailed by "Respectability to support" portrayed, the array would almost balance the other in losses of vitality and ability.

Excursions beyond the borders of Formalism bring to the morale what excursions to the country bring to the physique. There is a sense of delight in doffing the livery of society, in exchanging its set phrases for the free expression of thought, in permitting feeling to have natural play. We know we must return to the post of duty, to the irksome routine, to the close walls, but perhaps our enjoyment of the temporary freedom is all the more intense for that certainty.

Our outward affairs may not be at all to our liking, but our content is nevertheless so great that every hour seems a festival. The relaxation makes our dreams seem realities, we revel in the mere consciousness of existence: even the grumbling of others, and similar narrowing influences which in Formalism are so depressing, now seem unable to affect us.

There are hours when we find a wonderful solace in a dishabille; when an irregularly served meal sharpens the appetite; when it is a positive rest to the soul to

have around us nothing neat, nothing straight, nothing orderly,—to be permitted to indulge in confusion. And this is not incompatible with an innate love of order amounting to fastidiousness.

The seeming paradox may be accounted for by liveliness of imagination, which points to too great a variety of plans and projects for strength to carry out. Something must be left undone,—why not let it be the tangible, visible things, rather than forego the piquant sensations ensuing from novel situations and pell-mell arrangements?

There is a picturesqueness in disorder and irregularity. Children and women—pretty ones—never look so pretty, so bewitching, as when delivered from the thralldom of conventional costume and behavior. We should not wish it permanent, this deliverance. We recognize that there are things even better than prettiness and abandon; but we like and enjoy them as occasional phases.

Proper conduct is desirable, undoubtedly. And we must be thankful that it can be so widely enforced as it is: but, the sign is not the thing itself. Not all the men and women who go about so demurely, are so demure within themselves. Unruly spirits under calm demeanor seem to argue hypocrisy. But what, in the name of humanity, are erratic people to do, if they may neither express nor repress themselves without incurring reproach! Difficult, indeed, to know what to do.

Improper conduct is not to be thought of,—or if, merely for experiment, it is verged upon, there is a quick revulsion of feeling ending in withdrawal. Standing upon that verge, enough was seen and felt

to prove that stepping beyond would bring more humiliation than satisfaction. Once arrived in vagabond territory we are quickly claimed by its denizens, forced into their associations. What in the distance had seemed to us wild, almost romantic, would in actual contact be license and vulgarity. No, no, dear respectable people of vagabond temperament, do not, for your own sakes, cross the frontier of Respectability without a pass insuring your safe return. A brief sojourn there will, I grant, give you many new ideas, many attractive bits of color, diverse groupings and character-sketches. But as a resident you would not be happy; for that, you must be born and bred on the soil.

This much only can be allowed to those among us who at times feel the yoke of civilization bearing upon us too heavily,—short excursions, under a trusty escort, into vagabond-land. Doing this, we obtain needed relaxation without forfeiting our birthright; and we return to our respective respectable places in a far more contented frame of mind. If not wholly satisfactory, they still offer infinitely better things than the land just visited. Another thing to do is to plunge heartily into some occupation congenial to taste and ability. As soon as men and women show the world that they can do something above mediocrity, they are pardoned for being “peculiar,” “queer,” “original.” As compensation for sundry vexations, erratic people have the comfort of knowing that they are very attractive to their kind; that the sympathy and love thus spontaneously given are of the purest quality.

## XII.

### AUTHORS.

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THAT we do things is not a proof of our liking to do them. In many cases there is a motive behind the doing which would surprise those interested merely in the thing done. A man may be a good accountant without finding any satisfaction in his daily tasks. A woman may be an excellent housewife without deriving any pleasure from her round of duties. In fact, few people can be said to like the actual work of any pursuit. In literary affairs this is especially noticeable, perhaps because the mind is so fertile in suggesting pleasanter things.

Authors are of two kinds. First, those born and bred to the profession. Whether they admire it or not, they have its two great essentials, brain-power and skill for its utilization. Second, those born and bred out of the profession. They have either fancied it or been driven into it; they possess literary tastes and ambitions, but neither inherited gifts nor the facility of execution which comes of early practice.

In the last-named there is a period of incipient authorship in which the mind wavers between fiction, facts, essays, dramas, poems, and what not. There is an exuberance which runs into all manner of fanciful

extravagance. Everything seems probable: nothing seems impossible. Whatever is seen, whatever is felt, whatever is imagined, points to the one goal. It is as if the mind were released from a long imprisonment and thrown amid the world's treasures of literature with no injunctions of restraint or prohibition. Endless enjoyment, marvellous achievements, are the dominant sensations. There is a mental jubilee in the anticipation of success. What obstacles so serious that youth and ignorance cannot demolish with a wave of the hand! For a brief season there is full delight in planning, building, coloring. But following this come all the varied difficulties and vexations inseparable from the execution of projects.

A vigorous brain is analogous to a vigorous child. It is at times wilful, perverse, aggravating. In the very moment when it ought to be doing one thing it provokingly insists upon doing another—or wishing to—which amounts to the same. Often it is in a strangely restless humor, as if a fulness of being caused a multiplicity of interests that interfere with advancement. Not a day that such a brain does not give its trainer much ado to preserve patience and forbearance. There are hours when he grows weary of his charge, overtaxed with this wandering in chaos. Of what use? he exclaims, to what purpose all this grasping of ideas, of observations, of feelings? Why accumulate this mass of fragmentary papers?

A brain is like an artist's studio. Suppose we find there sketches of every conceivable object, animate or inanimate, but not a single finished picture. And suppose the artist assure us that he devotes every hour

of every day to his art. Yet, if he leave nothing to posterity save those germs, our admiration for indications of genius would be lost in pity for the weakness of purpose so glaringly manifest. An amateur author's brain is crowded with events, sentiments, opinions, observations; with suggestions, fragments, beginnings, endings; with everything save the continuous work that carries to completion.

Desultory writing is to him what unrestricted pleasures are to the youth. To run a course of unbridled scribbling cannot lead to a high position in the world of Letters. The material for good work may exist in the mind; but the moulding of these into visible form calls for an energy and assiduity that are lacking. "Waste! unpardonable waste!" cries the man, glancing backwards after pleasure has lost its zest. "Waste! reckless waste!" cries the amateur author, as the fragmentary writings of past years come to recollection. But another era opens. Experience—that stern, ungracious, but excellent dame—comes to the rescue. Through rebuff, through humiliation, she brings the youthful scribbler face to face with facts. With eyes now opened, shall he spend his energy in bewailing past blindness? Shall there be perpetual self-reproach over the idle reveries, the imaginary projects, the fruitless experiments? That an author should know what kind of a brain he has to work with is just as important as for an oarsman to know his strength of muscle. If a brain be impressionable, easily pleased, easily displeased, its owner must needs bend to its exigencies. Shall he grow discouraged because of inability to compose when in a crowd? Possibly, the very susceptibility which disables him when there, will, when in

solitude, enable him to pursue a train of thought at once logical and penetrative.

Execution is to an untrained brain what manual labor is to the fine gentleman. Such a brain thinks, but to little purpose; plans, but never embodies; aspires, but never escapes from old habits; chafes under conventionalities without strength to break away from them. It sees in itself greater ability than things heretofore set down would give ground for supposing possible: and this seeing implies neither imagination nor self-conceit. It is simply the consciousness of never yet having given its qualities fair play.

Every author has been young once, and this means timidity, scruples, and irresolution. Precocious children are never pleasing to a cultured understanding. It implies something forced, unnaturally developed, perhaps prying and meddlesome. It is the same with young authors. We do not wish to see them precocious, but prefer to see them do foolish things occasionally. Following the universal law of nature, they must necessarily make mistakes, commit imprudences. They must throw themselves open to censure, and receive plenty of it, before they can expect any recognition in the career so many have already trodden before them.

What is good writing? may be answered promptly by a simple formula any author can frame to suit himself. Whatever you write without conscious effort, without knowing, when the pages are finished, what you have written. Under the spell of the genius of authorship your responsibility is lifted from you. You write because you cannot help it; and pages



written thus no critic should frighten you into disavowing.

Spontaneous writing is the only kind destined to live. Unpremeditated, involuntary, it proves in a few flashes what would baffle the most profound scholar's life-research. Such writing comes not from duty, from need, not from any outward cause whatsoever, but from an inner fire which forces itself into expression. Changed in form, revised it may be; but the idea, the feeling, the passion,—this remains unalterable, inexplicable, mysteriously conceived and miraculously brought forth.

Yet, even after discovering what is good, and resolving to seek it, there come countless hindrances to its attainment. Interruptions! What a long array of fantastic trivialities thrusts itself with impunity between plan and execution!

A volunteer author is incessantly contending with difficulties which an author trained to the profession rarely sees or hears of. He is supposed to work, not for bread, not for position, but for pure pleasure. "He need not do it," says the world, and thereupon feels justified in making endless demands upon his time, his interests, his sympathies, his patience. Literary tastes do not bring about literary work. We may call intellectual life our natural element; but if, during a long period, we live out of that element, we cannot absorb its vital properties into our being. A very ample mental estate may be in our possession; but it may be wholly profitless through bad management. Reason tells the author this; but reason cannot fortify him against indolent habits, against domestic interferences, against social attractions. The entanglements which

beset him are complicated, persistent, discouraging. He sees with painful distinctness the conditions of authorship, that neither power nor opportunities can take form without a creative will.

Would it be impious to wish for misfortune as a means of attaining that end? Doubtless, it would be: and yet, I can conceive of a man so fired with enthusiasm in literary ventures that he is tempted to that impiety. In every age persecution and suffering have served as inspiration to artists, poets, thinkers. Deprived of country, home, fortune, friends, the mind is driven to its noblest resources as a refuge from outward ills. From such enforced isolation the world receives a picture, a statue, a poem, a system of philosophy,—a tribute of genius which no mere volition ever could have produced. Prosperity is a lullaby to genius. Adversity—shock upon shock—rends the chains of artificial life and delivers the captive soul.

An author's work is decided by Nature. We cannot write the things we would, or take the places which look inviting. Our longings for poetry or romance may be ardent, but those longings by no means decide our fitness for seats in the enchanted halls. Imagination plays an important part in our self-judgment. To conceive the work we would fain do, is one thing: the work itself is another. In many instances the distance between them is never overcome. Our plans, our conceptions—no matter for these! Let us look at the work actually in print. Here there can be no risk, no false estimate, no partial opinion, no self-delusion. So an author thinks until his work is done, and then how ill fitted he finds himself to be his own critic! How

indeed can he judge of what is or is not valuable, in a matter so far removed from volition as that composed of thought and feeling!

An author's first book! What a thrilling event for himself! how insignificant a one for the world! Expressed thought is but a shadow of the real thought that lives in the mind. Never, even after life-long practice, can the one be more than a reflection of the other. What, then, must be the embarrassment and the chagrin of a novice in the art! In vain does he dwell with rapture upon the beautiful ideal which hovers before his mind's eye! In vain does he sue, plead, and offer up daily sacrifices! Expression can never keep pace with Thought. Hence frequent vexation, strife, and discouragement. Patient assiduity may be called the sole means of assuaging the discord between conception and embodiment.

An artist beholding a wondrous landscape is seized with a desire to choose a subject for his pencil. He stands awe-struck under the immensity and diversity of Nature. Is it not audacious that he should attempt to transfer to canvas scenes of such magnitude, such transcendent loveliness, such mysterious depth? Not one feature, not one shade would he willingly lose. Nevertheless, he is driven to decision by reason. He can appreciate everything he sees, but he cannot paint everything. He is forced to select according to the intuition which tells what he possibly might accomplish.

So an author in his first book is puzzled by the multitude of subjects for thought presented. Even when culture is at the helm of judgment, he is liable to many mistakes, many trippings. He is like an in-

telligent but youthful traveller. He has prepared himself carefully for the journey, but his plans refuse to develop as he wishes. He knows what ought to be done—the places to be visited, the things seen,—but finds it difficult to be practical. He knows what he admires, what he enjoys, but is continually lured from his own personality by his sense of ignorance and inexperience. Shall he make a long sojourn in one place? Or, shall he attempt to see only the general features of a country, leaving details for another time? Shall he examine only what he takes an interest in? Or, shall he be advised by those who have previously gone over the same road? Shall he say openly what he thinks, or shall he distrust his first impressions and see what ensues from reflection? So with the inexperienced author. However good his preparations, he cannot avoid blunders. His ideas when shaped are not as symmetrical as they were in imagination. His observations do not come forth with that decision which marks the veteran writer. His theories, however original, instinctively lean upon authority. He only half knows his own strength and only half uses it.

A man's first journey teaches him how to travel: his second journey will show the results of the first. An author's first book teaches him what authorship means: his second book ought to be far better than the first.

The eventful day comes—the first book is out! The author takes a long breath. He still feels that his temerity is unparalleled, but the step cannot be retraced. The bridge that separated the private indi-

vidual from the Public has been crossed. Whatever his capacity, preparation, sense or nonsense, he is now before the bar of critical judgment. It makes him gasp with apprehension. He braces himself with the tonic called "Expect the Worst." He recalls all the sanguinary reviews which had met his eye, and which even when directed towards strangers excited his compassion. He remembers the bitter sarcasms of critics when an unlucky author ventures on new ground, or, when during such attempts he is too glowing in feeling to take account of style. He glances with terror at the numberless daily papers, at the weeklies, at the monthlies, at the quarterlies, each one of which may be inimical to the book which for the time being is the only one in existence. "If every one of those powers condemn," he soliloquizes, "people will not read the book. If people do not read, neither the good nor the bad will be known: in this case, even the adverse criticism I hope to profit by will be denied me."

A young author of sensitive fibre puts forth his first work with all the fear and shrinking which an actor experiences on his first night. This *débüt*,—how much depends upon it! If it bring failure—how shall he ever summon courage to appear again! With what painful anxiety he awaits the verdict of the audience! The work might have been better, far better if—but why moralize now upon past possibilities! All that is over. The book, weak or strong, worthy or worthless, has come into the world. What will become of it? Will it be courteously treated through a friendly feeling for the author? Will it be pronounced dry, heavy, flavorless, useless? Will it re-

ceive a commonplace, non-committal reception because of its harmless character? Or, will it be condemned as fallacious, heretical, injurious, likely to spread evil instead of good? Or,—oh, agonizing thought—will it fall still-born from the press?

If honest, the author confesses himself anxious to hear the world's opinion. True, whatever it is, it can make no essential difference to him or to his position. His tastes, his pursuits, his ambitions remain the same. Whatever the public will or will not say of it, he individually is unchanged. If condemned, either openly or tacitly, he cannot be surprised. For, although his thoughts and convictions are dear to him—some of them having been paid for at a high price—the book, in a literary view, he does not himself think much of. He is no manager, no disciplinarian, no expert, no veteran,—he is only an aspirant.

Author's Elixir! To drink long and deep of a potion which exhilarates without inebriating. To feel that every drop of the liquid penetrates our inmost springs of life, imparting strength where before was weakness, resolution where was vacillation, encouragement where was self-distrust—this is the effect of an elixir. Praise is the Author's Elixir. It comes to the aspirant unexpectedly, but is none the less delicious for that. It comes from unknown sources, but is all the more grateful to him for that. He blesses these benefactors for their bounty: they give more than they intended. Meaning to be just only, they give him hope, stimulus, self-poise.

Author's Elixir cannot be furnished by personal friends. Affection is too partial to weigh judgment.

When a friend gives praise I accept it as a sweet tribute, but cannot forget that reason has no part in it. My friend loves me: therefore his opinion is colored all over with that sentiment. He sees what others cannot see. He exaggerates unconsciously, he imagines ability, he intensifies reality. In hours of difficulty I appeal to him for help, for sympathy, for counsel, and all these are generously given. I marvel at my own frankness in saying what to any other ear would sound puerile, almost contemptibly egotistical. But, do I not know the wide charity of the heart I speak to? how cheerfully it would accept any pain, any burden, for the sake of alleviating my vexations? What this friend does for me is neither lightly esteemed, nor mislaid, but carefully treasured up beyond all other gifts. Yet—he cannot give me the Author's Elixir. This, if genuine, must come from a source where affection, with all its subtle influences, can have no part in decision.

A book from an unknown author is brought forth. Critics of every rank, capacity, and grade of culture glance at it. They know nothing of the author, of his age, his abilities, his training, his motives. They read what they find, and from the standpoint of individuality more or less tempered with reason, give a verdict. The unknown writer, tremblingly alive to opinions which are destined to sway his entire future career, listens to public criticism as to an oracle. Praise thus given is the Elixir which indemnifies for past toil, illumines present shadows, vivifies future prospects.

Who can more fitly sing the song of gratitude for the Author's Elixir than one who has just quaffed

the nectar? Warmed but not heated, braced but not elated, made joyous but not intoxicated, his soul is attuned to gladness by the precious drops poured into it. The doubt, the difficulty, the harassment, the pressure of self-mistrust which once enclosed his native force like a coat of mail round delicate limbs, have been mercifully removed. He feels for the first time in his life the full power of mental affinity, of psychological faith, of abstract human sympathy. He realizes the glowing fact that he is recognized by men to whom he is an entire stranger save by the mind's work.

Women as authors,—what are their qualifications, innate or acquired?

A supposed conversation between a young lady and a gentleman of some experience in authorship, may illustrate what seems to me the general sentiment in both sexes. The exceptions speak for themselves. Women may and do write books that the world reads. When they do, men never withhold justice, never refuse them the same criticism they would award literary work of their own sex.

*Young Lady and Gentleman.*

Young Lady.—I should so like to be an author!

Gentleman.—A very laudable wish—provided there be an aim behind it.

Young Lady.—Plenty of "aim," I assure you. If your laudation is to be in proportion it must be a liberal supply.

Gentleman.—Will you permit me to put a few plain questions?

Young Lady.—Most willingly. My mind is not at



all clear upon the subject, and I shall welcome every ray of light you can give me.

Gentleman.—Have you a special admiration for authors of the fair sex?

Young Lady.—Well—upon the whole, No! I admire, of course, those who are celebrated——

Gentleman.—Ah! I see—you wish to become a celebrated author.

Young Lady.—It sounds dreadfully vain, put in that way; but, I suppose it is true. In general, it seems to me, literary women are unattractive in manner—somewhat cold, didactic, indifferent to non-literary people. I confess, I like to be liked by everybody I meet. I should hate to feel that people were repulsed by anything in my manner, conversation, or occupation.

Gentleman.—You enjoy woman's prerogative—that, of being admired and petted—and would dislike to give it up.

Young Lady.—To be frank—you are right.

Gentleman.—Then, you need not wish to be an author.

Young Lady.—But, my friend, wait a minute—you have not heard all. There are other reasons why I wish it—one in particular. I need money. When I hear of Miss “So and So” receiving a handsome sum for a serial story or a poem, is it not natural to wish I could do the same?

Gentleman.—Ah! we are coming to a practical view of the question. You have, then, two incentives to authorship—ambition and money?

Young Lady.—Yes. No one knows how greatly I dislike my present occupation—teaching. My intellect feels as if it had been starved. I long to be

occupied in something which will give it the nourishment it has long craved. Instead of teaching others, I myself want to be taught.

Gentleman.—You do not feel as some women do, that teaching is your “vocation”?

Young Lady.—No indeed, I do not! I do it because compelled to. It has always been and still is drudgery. I should owe a debt of everlasting gratitude to the one who would show me the way out of it. I cannot perform manual labor, but almost anything else would be preferable to teaching.

Gentleman.—After this avowal I begin to see more clearly. Have you ever written anything—I mean besides letters, or diaries?

Young Lady.—I never wrote anything except letters—and these very short. I never kept a diary. As for anything else, the thought never entered my head until a short time ago, when your cousin suggested my writing a novel.

Gentleman.—Did Mary say that?

Young Lady.—Yes; but I took it as half in jest. Recently, however, she repeated it, and more earnestly still.

Gentleman.—Did she give any reason for her suggestion?

Young Lady.—Oh, she said she could judge very well from my letters as to my ability; she felt certain that I could write a novel. I only laughed in reply and felt quite as certain that I could not.

Gentleman.—Well, suppose you begin a correspondence with me—merely, you know, to enable me to judge of your style.

Young Lady.—A very cool proposition, certainly!

A good joke! Do you think I could write ten lines fluently and naturally if I knew my correspondent were going to criticise every idea, thought, and word?

Gentleman.—I would promise beforehand to be lenient, predisposed in your favor, anxious only to discover germs of talent.

Young Lady.—Then I should gain nothing. You would be only a correspondent, after all, and would give me no genuine criticism.

Gentleman.—Suppose, then, that you would look upon me as a sort of unprejudiced critic—say a magazine editor. Write whatever and just as you choose. In return you shall have an honest opinion from me.

Young Lady.—Seriously, do you think me capable of becoming an author?

Gentleman.—Seriously, I know of only two things that might prevent you from winning that honor—if you think it such.

Young Lady.—I don't like that last slur,—but, shall let it go now, that I may hear about those “two things.” Pray tell me what they are?

Gentleman.—Very willingly. First, your self-distrust: second, your social tendencies.

Young Lady.—As regards the first, you are quite right. As to the second, I hardly understand your drift.

Gentleman.—Let me explain. You have many warm friends who seek your society and whom you seek. This fact, however charming in itself, would, I believe, greatly interfere with any literary plan you might make.

Young Lady.—What! you think a woman must give up social life if she becomes an author? That would indeed be a hard fate!

Gentleman.—A few women, possibly, might be excepted. In general I should say—yes! Among all the women I know, there is scarcely one who would have physical strength to perform two parts.

Young Lady.—Two parts?

Gentleman.—Yes: that is, to be a woman of society and a literary woman. Or, to be an artist and a domestic woman. It matters little what pursuits you choose to take for comparison. To take more than one part and play it well requires genius. Very few, of either sex, have this.

Young Lady.—Poor little me! My brain is all in a whirl. What am I to do? Where am I to begin? Above all else I want, I really want to be an author. Yet, seeing my lamentable deficiencies for the vocation, no wonder the idea seems too big for me to grasp.

Gentleman.—If you are in earnest, my friend, there is nothing in the world to prevent your doing what many other young women with no greater natural abilities are doing every day. If you are not tired, let us look briefly at the leading points in this question. First of all, you tell me that you are obliged to do work of some kind for a living.

Young Lady.—Unfortunately—yes. During several years I have been teaching with that object—under that pressure, I may say. It gives me no pleasure, as I said before, and so much fatigue that at the close of the day I am unfitted for even the lightest reading. If I could find employment which would give my mental faculties fair play, I should be the happiest woman in the world.

Gentleman.—Piano! piano! There you are off in

an upper sphere, leaving me down on earth. You must keep by me if I am to help you in the least.

Young Lady.—Of course I will—with the greatest pleasure, if you will only show me how.

Gentleman.—When I say, my dear young lady, I am quite certain you can write a good novel, I do not mean that you can do it this year, or even next.

Young Lady.—Dear! dear! Two years' work without remuneration! How am I to live meanwhile?

Gentleman.—Moreover, it would be extremely unwise to start with so large a piece of work. You could write a short story in much less time than a year, and you could begin this at once.

Young Lady.—I am deeply interested in your remarks, and promise to follow your advice as far as my strength permits.

Gentleman.—I don't recommend a story because I think it the best kind of writing, but simply because it is more likely to be accepted by any magazine or any publisher. Either a story, or an historical sketch, or scenes from society,—either of these would give you ample scope. Upon the whole, I should think your best field would be society. You have seen a great variety of people in various classes, your observations are unusually keen, your deductions very just, your command of language far above the average.

Young Lady.—Very pleasant to hear all this, but you give me more than I deserve.

Gentleman.—Pardon me—you may have all of these advantages and yet—not be able to write well. No matter how great your abilities, they will avail you nothing without a great deal of practice. Writing is an art, and requires enthusiastic devotion.

Young Lady.—Ah! I knew it would be beyond my powers. As soon as you mention “art” and “years of study” I feel my courage giving way. I should never be able to do it, I am sure.

Gentleman.—As you know, many others have done and are doing this thing.

Young Lady.—But I am not strong; I could not bear the continued application.

Gentleman.—I would upon no account persuade you to try, my friend. In my opinion, there are many things you are much better fitted for. For the present, I would advise you to remain in the path already chosen—in that of teaching.

Was there ever a woman born into the Republic of Letters? I think not. True, her parents, her friends, may be literary, and give her largely of their tastes, greatly assist her culture. But, does a young girl, however brilliant in mind, ever dream of preparing for authorship? I think not. And there are very good, very satisfactory reasons for her not so dreaming—for her dreaming other things.

Woman prefers human hearts to human praises. Were all that the world could give of admiration, of fame, of renown, placed in the balance against hearts, there would be no wavering as to choice.

Yet some women do become authors, just as some others come into positions they did not choose and do not like. Teachers, actresses, dancers, singers, saleswomen, working-women,—these, probably, have no more fondness for their duties than authors have.

But voluntary authorship,—surely this implies pleasure in the work! Not entirely: only so far as doing a

thing that seems best for the occasion, may "voluntary" be so interpreted. Women may have everything that means and social life offer, without finding employment enough for their energies. As a result we see benevolent societies, religious enthusiasts, philanthropists, reformers, musicians, artists, authors. Generalities are apt to be tedious. Personalities bring us nearer to the question at hand. So, from among volunteer authors en masse, I select one whose general features may give an idea of her class. Of no consequence where she lives, how she looks, what her antecedents. Enough to know that she writes,—and with an object. If it be not perceptible, so much the worse for her,—it cannot be labelled. Some people get into mischief through sheer ennui. This woman would certainly have done so if she had not fallen into authorship. What if her writings are not widely read, or read only to be forgotten! The occupation is of itself the desired end: she herself is diverted and instructed if the world is not.

Her brain is not one of great calibre, and has had no training whatsoever. It is difficult to manage. It is active, but capricious; it is a roving brain, a brain of strong "Bohemian" tendencies. It grows restless under regularity, it wilts under formality, it withers under training. It takes no interest in general information. It eschews statistics, it has no intimacy with facts; it avoids descriptions; it holds in slight esteem most things which other brains greatly prize. So far does this go that the mere presence of an orderly practical brain acts upon hers like a blight. Even to hear of the discipline to which other brains are subjected affects her painfully. She thinks of it as a spe-

cies of self-torture similar to that practised by certain tribes of Indians to show their fortitude under suffering. Her brain is sybaritic, refusing either to work or to play, save under its own conditions. A person in the room, a noise in the street, a bird singing; the recollection of an engagement, somebody to meet, or something to get; the thought of a friend, of an enemy, —either of these is enough to mar its action. It must have nothing mechanical to do—and a long course of it—before it can think to any purpose.

Its imaginative faculty started, it will not suffer interruption. For the time being its owner is metamorphosed. She is by turns young, middle-aged, old, a worldling, a recluse, a saint, a sinner,—she is any conceivable character in any conceivable age or sphere, acting in any conceivable condition or event. She can throw herself into the personality of the best or the worst that ever lived. Her pages speak of heresies, of passions, of temptations, of guilt, of infinite contingencies which may not in reality have swayed her, but which she knows imaginatively. Any phase of hate, intemperance, or crime can be described as if seen, known, and felt. It is a power that works spite of herself, but it works only in spells. The glow over, she can do nothing.

Anti-authorship, for this woman, means varied unpleasant experiences from without and from within. She hears of clever, managing, practical women who “make good wives and mothers,” “maintain a wide social circle,” attend faithfully to “religious duties,” and—write books besides! She stands bewildered before so long a list of virtues; and, upon recovering



herself, grumbles at Nature's unfairness. Why give so much to one kind of women, so little to another kind? For, apparently, many women find it arduous enough to be the "good wife and mother" without anything else. Others consume all their strength in society's behalf. Others, again, give to religious duties the choicest hours of existence, leaving no vitality for other duties. But, to hear of women who can perform all of these functions satisfactorily, seems well-nigh incredible.

Yet, people tell her of it as a positive fact. Her only response is: "Of course, it must be so; but we cannot all do the same things in the same way." Anti-authorship, then, for this non-remarkable woman, means sundry annoyances and difficulties. Intellectual importunity drives her to writing, but the thought of publication means something very different from prior scribbling for her own pleasure. The momentous questions: How? What form? What plan? Ideas and sentiments cannot be thrown pell-mell into the treasury of Literature. They must be put into an individual shape, one that will bear the stamp of their progenitor. Seeking to answer these questions she enters upon the experimental stage. While there she meets with many curious adventures and learns from them many instructive lessons.

As a result, there comes—no wonderful book to startle the world into admiration—nothing of the kind. There come only several years of absolute quiescence as regards the Public. She is learning the art of expression: her brain is growing, ripening. Its activity is incessant, intense, embarrassing even, but she has an intuition that it means something. For the present

her way is the narrow, obscure one of Application. What has heretofore been deplored as ill-regulated, as unwarranted ambition, as instability, may, after all, be the throes of a mind struggling into birth. The intellect seems at times to be taken out of itself, in that state enabled to criticise, analyze its own disjointed efforts as if they were those of an eager, self-complacent, ignorant child.

Introspective glances show us what we are and where we are. If they reveal conditions neither judgment nor feeling sanction, the more speedily we seek a remedy the better.

The embryo author hears herself called "studious," "learned;" hears friendly voices rallying her about "those books" she must be writing. Probably, her own profound sense of ignorance awakens a smile at the first words: but the second remark throws her into a just appreciation of her indolent musing or frivolous pursuits. Hours of triviality greatly outnumbering hours of study; strong resolves overbalanced by weak compliances; an ignoble position made unbearable by a consciousness of desiring a noble one;—such are some of the facts made clear by introspection.

She writes then, but sees nothing in her attempts that can in the least minister to her vanity or egotism. Intellect is a regal gift. Its responsibilities are literary tastes, eagerness, enthusiasm. Its results should

she finds the discipline requisite for authorship extremely wearisome. The world is so full of attractions, she herself feels capable of partaking of so many of them, that the seclusion of a study soon becomes distasteful.

She writes—yes, she writes a great deal—but, what of that? To write tales, romances, dramas, essays, or poems, does not mean that the world wants them. She herself looks coldly at them when finished, wondering how she ever came to spend so much time over so meagre a reality. Then come days of absolute non-literary humor, days when she feels unconscious of having ever written a page. What, she cries, are then my long-cherished aims but a miserable delusion! No thoughts, no imagination, no ambition, no desire even to read! The literary career once so sanguinely anticipated assumes a shadowy aspect. Vexation over lack of executive ability induces suspicions of mental inanity. She has been told that women are unfitted for literary life—and is half inclined to believe it.

But there come other days, days bright with encouragement, hope, ardor. Intellectual apprenticeship finally yields the secret of mastering the intellect. Not that she is a genius, but such ability as she has is gradually developed. Finally, when her first book appears she passes through all the excitement—only much intensified—that the volunteer of the other sex experiences. She, too, expects the worst, fortifies herself upon it. And when something better than that, better far than her most daring flight of hope had anticipated, she, too, quaffs the Author's Elixir. She is not surprised when critics speak of her writings as "very good," "almost remarkable," etc.,—"for a

woman." No—she is not surprised, not indignant at this. She knows a little about women, and believes there are some things they cannot do quite as easily or quite as well as men. Writing books, for instance, she thinks must be easier for men to do. She grants that there are a few remarkable women who do remarkable things with wonderful facility. But, she gives her judgment as formed from other women, among whom she herself belongs. Such women, as she well knows, are not educated to be anything in particular except "young ladies," so that, when later they desire to do or to be something more, they find it a little difficult.

It is not merely her want of training that makes literary work irksome: it is its incompatibility with domestic life. Under no conditions does the time come when a woman having family ties, can throw herself into literary work with her mind free enough to work its will. Spite of literary tastes, aims, and ambitions, these are only secondary to her woman-nature, which seeks domesticity under almost any shape, at almost any cost. However great her literary ardor at the beginning of an undertaking, it abates as she progresses. In her own words, she grows "tired and restless." If it were not for the money she needs, or for the shame at her idleness, or for the troublesome thoughts resulting from mental activity and luxury combined, I believe a woman would rarely be found in the ranks of authorship.

### XIII

## OUR KNIGHTS.

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KNIGHTHOOD is to-day as vital a force in society as of old. There is that in our common nature which admires valor, skill, power. In that admiration we find the origin of warriors, of feudal lords, of knights, of chiefs, of kings. The title is but the sign of the thing itself. Yet, being that, it implies advantage and distinction. Whether our country be a republic, a monarchy, or an empire, matters little as to knight-hood: the principle and its demonstration, here is the point of interest.

Glancing at our own history during the past century, we find as honorable a list of individual knights as any other nation whatsoever, in the same period and under the same conditions, could furnish. What more can we ask? what more expect? Take the Order of Government. If it fail, as an organization, to meet the anticipations of optimists or idealists, the fault lies in their vision. It is one-sided: it expects roses out of thistles, honesty out of knavery, reason out of unreason. The Order is not a perfect one simply because its knights are not perfect men. Can we, do we realize this sufficiently? If so, we could not, it seems to me, allow ourselves to express so

much impatience and so much indignation at the workings of an Order which, after all, is much better than many others men live under. Not that we are to sit passive under injustice, show servility under oppression, cowardice under outrage. We are to the utmost of our ability to resist and counteract those conditions: but, doing so, we are not to ignore the distinction between principles and men.

If we say querulously, The Order of Government is not respected because its knights are deficient in statesmanship, in culture, in dignity, in patriotism,—we may speak truth, but without in the least helping the matter. If the Order is ever to have knights with those requisites, why are there none now being trained for it? Can diplomacy have skilful workmen unless they are drilled to the service? If we think so fatuously, surely we deserve nothing better than we have—mainly the wrong men in the wrong places. The Order of Government does not want partisans, soldiers, theologians, scholars, or merchants as leaders: it wants statesmen. How these are made, how they are to be utilized, how they are to be honored,—upon these points history gives all facts and inferences in strictly logical sequence to whomsoever will take the trouble to read them.

From even cursory glances at such records it is discovered that statesmanship is as much a life-study as art, or science, or philosophy. Can we conceive of anything more absurd than to remove an artist from his studio to a seat in Congress? a merchant from his counting-house to a scientific chair? or, to put a sailor into the army? a mechanic in a literary field? Yet, in the above Order similar absurdities are not uncom-

mon. Training the best brains and best characters from among the youth of the republic for statesmanship seems, thus far, wholly foreign to the national mind. Clear intellects and cultured ones are not lacking, but, for some reason there seems no honor attached to the devotion of these powers to the government. There is a slur upon titles which should represent genuine nobility; a stigma upon offices which the highest grade of ability should deem it laudable to attain.

If in the most menial household service we think it advisable to have skilled hands, assuredly the same principle must apply with equal force to important posts in the government. The ablest men in fitting places is the sole security of good work. In manufactures, in science, in literature, in every kind of industry and art, this is the simple rule underlying success. If in all other things, why not in government? Impossible, say some, to have statesmen and diplomatists in a country where position and tenure depend upon voters. Why be at the labor of training when there is no permanent situation to be trained for? It is not easy to see how this can be refuted.

Yet, if the nation thrive, if it be content, why ask for any change in the Order of Government? It is as it is, it will be so as long as it lasts, nothing better need be anticipated. The knights, both in embryo and in maturity, are here with us, as able, as spirited, as loyal, as in any other age or country. But, if they are not needed they will not be educated for the service. If there are no disciplined men, other kinds must be put into places for which they have no single qualification. How they perform their functions all

the world can see, while nobody, apparently, is in fault.

Yet, spite of this insuperable obstacle to power and greatness as a nation, the republic has many valuable records for posterity. The multitude has been like the multitude of any other country, ignorant, fickle, unruly. But individuals, the men of high tone, of profound intellect, of noble patriotism, who toiled in its behalf, they have put it where it stands to-day. Such men are the heroes we love to worship. Living or dead, known or unknown personally, we bow before their nobility, their self-sacrifice, their achievements. Whether statesmen, whether philanthropists, whether soldiers, whether sailors, whether citizens, we care not. We ask only to see their character-diploma: if this certify of probity, of fidelity, of honorable ambition, we are satisfied to give our trust and admiration.

To have faith in a government—whatever its form—means to have faith in individual men. Where, in past or present, is there a country containing numbers of patriots, of statesmen, of benefactors in any sphere? Characters representing greatness or goodness stand out in so bold a relief on a nation's history that they seem to personate the whole nation. But, to be just, we cannot forget how few are these great or good men. Nor, while duly grateful for the benefits of a republic, ought we to lose sight of its disadvantages.

No form of government is wholly desirable either in principles or in results. If we have a great deal of freedom we must needs take with it a great deal of license. In no stage of civilization do we find a multitude of men who are enlightened, who are self-controlled, but precisely the reverse. A vast array of



voters means a vast amount of ignorance, of partisanship, of selfishness. Exemption from the ceremonial and etiquette of a court necessitates the crudity and miscellaneous confusion of a democratic seat of government. If we see numerous objectionable features in an aristocracy, we may be well assured that foreign eyes see just as long a list of undesirable qualities in our republic. In truth, the two sides of this question so ably discussed by philosophers of every age, leave unprejudiced minds very much in doubt as to superiority on either side. The simple argument so often used with a child when embarrassed in the choice of something desired—"My dear, if you take this, you cannot have that: it must be one or the other"—seems equally applicable to nations.

If we have a republic, if we value it, if we deem it best for the general welfare, let us by all means cling to it with unflinching tenacity. But doing so, surely it is unpardonable folly to complain about its weak places, its ugly blots. The essential point to decide—every individual mind for itself—is this: Is not a republic, with all its defects and its tumult, yet the best form of government known? If the response come in the affirmative, then let us be proud of it, and show it by being content—or forbearing.

The Order of Religion exists in our country under peculiarly fortunate circumstances. It has everything that wealth, influence, enthusiasm, and fostering care can furnish. It has organization, thoroughly drilled rulers, countless submissive subjects, and all the power accruing from those facts. As an Order it exhibits the highest offices filled by the best-disciplined knights.

Consequently, there is every incentive to young men of devotional minds to prepare themselves for the Order, to forego every other claim or advantage in its behalf. Yet, this state of things has not come to pass without many disputes, controversies, and revolutions. The leaders in this Order whose names are immortalized have as tumultuous a history-record as any other knights in any other cause. In its ranks, too, are to be found all the contrarieties and inconsistencies seen in other human institutions.

Men are none the less men because they belong to this Order, or because they are trained for it and expect to spend their lives in it. Intellect, physique, conscience, these evince their special attributes in every undertaking, under every form of zeal, throughout every phase of activity or passivity. Conscience is the watchword of the three divisions of the Order—Theology, Morality, Humanity—but, oddly enough, it brings forth results at once diverse and conflicting.

Theology insists upon a name, a shape, a creed, upon times, places, and ceremonies. It exacts obedience to its rules, punishes delinquents with both present stripes and threats of more in the future. It makes profession of intellect for itself, but refuses absolutely to allow its adherents to form any personal opinions. It is an Autocrat in the widest sense, holding itself answerable to no other earthly power. Whoever yields prompt obedience to its commands receives smiles, rewards, posts of honor. Whoever questions its authority must bend under its displeasure, accept the sentence it decrees, suffer every grade of penalty between social ostracism and eternal damnation. Knights of Theology, then, upon taking the

vows of their Order, bind themselves to obey implicitly, to ignore every personal conviction, to disregard every natural feeling, to act only in accord with the chosen standard. With few exceptions they are self-denying, indefatigable workers, devoted body and soul to the Autocrat whose uniform they wear.

Their history is contained in many thousands of volumes, ranging from rigid catechisms for infant minds to minute descriptions of future worlds which the souls of men are to inhabit. Learning, devotion, sanctity, and asceticism occupy one shelf, while controversy, bigotry, persecution, and inhumanity fill another. Theology, like other human organizations, accomplishes much good through much evil. Its two essentially noble results are, a strong governing hand over the masses, and a driving of the thinking few into spiritual emancipation. Acknowledging this, who would wish the power of theology weakened!

Man seems to be so constituted that he requires striking contrasts to bring him into a philosophical condition. And, progressive as he is, it is still well to remember that no stage can be unduly hurried. This principle assists the mind to solve that ever-perplexing question, How can men of fine intellectual abilities bring themselves to teach doctrines at once puerile and fallacious? We assume, naturally, that they themselves do not, cannot believe them; but that they deem them the strongest mental nourishment inferior beings can receive. Only by taking this view can we grow reconciled to many of the extraordinary absurdities practised in some forms of religion. We may even bring ourselves to respect a teacher of bigotry, if we believe him sincere in his endeavors to save men

and women from working worse mischief in society than they otherwise would.

Knights of Morality are higher in rank than those of Theology. A man of that Order asks of other men no questions as to name, place, and creed: he asks only for principles and deeds. They may or may not be regular attendants at church, mosque, or temple. Religious instruction is to the conscience what general literature is to the intellect. The child needs the best teachers of both branches. But childhood and youth run their course in religion no less than in intellect. In manhood many childish beliefs disappear, to be replaced by other and more vigorous convictions. Dare a man murmur, need he despond, because what once yielded benefit or rapture no longer produces the same effect? What if he hear certain voices among the crowd hoarsely shrieking, "Irreligion, Atheism, Infidelity!" They mean it to express opprobrium, this he knows and feels. For, although honest in conviction, he is not insensible to ill-will, or to the privations implied by popular censure.

No—a man who feels in himself the mystery of growth, dare not murmur, need not despond. If manly, he cannot but rejoice in his augmented virility. His sole anxiety is how best to use the gift in his possession. If he see that superstition and cant are rife, insidiously undermining the best attributes of progress, he deems it unknighly to remain mute and inert. If he cannot do much towards lifting the load of ignorance from human shoulders, he can do something. Reason is slow in developing. Apart from its native calibre there are multitudes of crippling agencies act-

ively working to confound its deductions. Customs, traditions, worldly interests, family ties, friendships,—these and other influences act upon even the strongest minds.

Moralists, then, grow slowly—often painfully—into their opinions, into their independence. The bold utterance from their lips may have cost them many a siege of doubt, many pangs of self-réproach, many precious hours of social intercourse. No man outgrows ignorance without oft-repeated mortifications and bitter experiences. Religious conformity, blindly given, is the form of ignorance the moralist himself seeks to escape from, and to help others in the same endeavor.

Knights of Humanity are several grades higher in rank than those of Morality. They are men emancipated from ignorance, from custom, from superstition, from fear. They are in themselves and in their actions the incarnation of religion, as conceived by the noblest of the world's prophets and martyrs. They are moved with compassion, they are thrilled with tenderness, they burn with indignation. In their knightly duties and undertakings they know no distinction of country, of class, of endowment. All men, all women, all children, have a claim upon their sympathies, upon their time, upon their labor. They estimate the privileges of intellect, of morality, of prosperity, at their just value, but do not, therefore, reproach non-privileged mortals with their poverty.

They believe with Mazzini that "the religious idea exists in and for humanity, for humanity alone knows the aim towards which it is advancing. Humanity

alone hears the voice bidding it pursue that aim, and is the sole possessor of the secret that unites its various races. Religion in its own essence, is one eternal and immutable as God himself, but in its external form and development, it is governed by the law of time, which is the law of mankind."

Knights of Humanity take views of life broad enough to include not only people in their greatness and in their littleness, but all shades of ability and inability, of strength and weakness, of beauty and ugliness. Human nature, to their understanding, is not a vague subject, but one more clearly defined than any system of theology or any theory of government.

Enlightenment of the race through every avenue of intellect, heart, and conscience is the sole creed of their order. Rank and culture are not vilified, but made to yield their quota towards the one grand end—development. Poverty and degradation are regarded as inevitable in the general scheme, but as capable of amelioration, as serviceable even in arousing men to earnest resistance against all the petty indulgences which lead to misery.

Chivalry assumes various forms. In one epoch it is war. At this sound legions spring into activity ready to sacrifice love and life for an idea. Men of intellect and experience fall into their natural places as leaders, others fall into theirs as followers, while both are animated by the same stimulus. Injustice and suffering never appeal in vain to nobility of character. It rises above wealth, drives out sybaritism, sets aside commerce, postpones science, drops mechanism, and plunges body and soul into the work of redress.

Is there ever a war where any class or any occupation is unrepresented? For the time being men are fired with chivalry under the name of patriotism. Does it import on which side they contend, for which motive or idea? None whatever as regards chivalry. Its spirit is the same in both belligerents, its demonstrations similar, always in accord with physique and morale. Nor is it on the battle-field alone that knighthood may be shown. All men cannot fight, but all men can be true knights: all can put the best of themselves into the cause they have faith in. True, the men who are directly in the breach, fronting death or mutilation, receive popular sympathy and enthusiasm. And justly so. The popular mind must inevitably be touched by external means; it is incapable of any other susceptibility. Its heroes are soldiers, sailors, the bold men of action, the adventurous spirits of the day. But the thinking mind discerns patriotism no less in the physician, in the priest, in the scientist, in the artisan, in all the grades and pursuits of civil life.

As for woman—she shrinks from war with horror. The excitement, the new flood of life it opens to men, the dream of glory, these are nothing to her. She sees only the pain of separation from father, son, lover; the agony of suspense during warfare; the dire desolation of the domestic hearth; the universal misery spreading over the land. And yet, notwithstanding these ordeals, woman recognizes and does obeisance to knighthood. This it is that rouses her to the sacrifice of her affections, to active participation in war exigencies, to saintly resignation to its bereavements. Without noble women there could be no inspiration

to knightliness: without true knights there could be no loving, tender women.

Wars have not ceased because we are in the nineteenth century: nor is there reason for believing that there ever will be an epoch when absolute peace will reign. It is incompatible with the human race. But, war to-day, however harrowing, is not the protracted interminable horror of former ages. Modern civilization enables the mightiest and best-disciplined army to decide the question at issue with a sweeping but swift destruction. This amelioration enables both nations to resume their normal peaceful occupations while profiting from the awful lessons of their quarrel.

Our knights of to-day then, however valiant in spirit, have far less to do as warriors than as citizens. Here it is, mainly, that we are to judge of their gallantry, their honor, their prowess. The Great Order of Social Life is divided and subdivided into countless branches. Diplomacy, Theology, Science, Art, Commerce, Literature, Mechanism, all these throw out their inducements to knights seeking name and fortune. What they achieve, how they achieve, and what results from achievement,—these have a deep interest for the women who in thought and feeling are anxiously following their career.

Chivalry in society ranges from the simple act of courtesy to the brave defence of life and honor. To define it accurately would be impossible. It is not manner. That may be unexceptionable, while impatience or unkindness is detected underneath. It is not language. That may be faultless in accent and rhetoric, while leaving us coldly indifferent. It is not



actions. These may be replete with liberality and painstaking, while yet causing in us only an unpleasant sense of obligation. No—it is not these attributes alone. But, when they proceed from innate respect for woman, when they evince appreciation and protection clothed in manly gentleness, then they exemplify that world-recognized principle.

Chivalry is the source of man's power over woman. Personal beauty, wealth, renown,—these have indeed great attractions for some women. But upon the noblest types, those of high spirit and warm hearts, they fail utterly in competition with valor, refinement, and devotion. All women have their favorite knights selected and graciously treated according to usages of the age. A woman of the world wishes her knight to bear the banner of wealth, or of distinction. She incites, she assists, she sacrifices, all in one direction: her mind, feelings, and wishes are made subservient to that single aim. And where there is sincerity and honest toil there can be no censure. We may not admire the motive animating the individual, but we see the benefits accruing from it to the world at large. So with women of other characteristics; every one selects the knight who best accords with her intellect and heart. Whether they have courage to act upon preference hangs upon many other contingencies.

Indeed, here as elsewhere, choice may mean several things. The men we admire and like—ah! here there is no hesitation, no difficulty of interpretation. And whatever we do or say, whatever we take or refuse, that liking and that admiration remain the same throughout life. Every woman, in brief, has her ideal

of manhood to which, amid all the changes incident to years and circumstances, she remains faithful.

Unhappily, women, like men, marry from a variety of motives irrespective of personal inclination. Society exacts matrimonial alliances for the sake of wealth, ambition, expediency. From royal circles down to the working-classes the principle is the same. Under its pressure women but too often drive back feeling, and keep it in abeyance as best they can. But, married or not, a woman never loses the appreciation of chivalry. Whether it come from relative, from friend, from acquaintance, from stranger, it rarely fails to ingratiate the donor in her regard. He may have blemishes of person, defects of temper, faults of manner, may even commit grave errors without forfeiting her interest. This, from woman to man. Individual cases present the diverse grades of honor and affection ensuing from temperament and culture.

"Nothing," says Hume, "can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. It is *natural* in the highest degree. Art and education, in the most elegant courts, make no more alteration on it than on all the other laudable passions. They only turn the mind more towards it; they refine it; they polish it; and give it a proper grace and expression. . . . As nature has given *man* the superiority above *woman*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body, it is his part to alleviate that superiority as much as possible by the generosity of his behavior, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions."

Men find their natural gallantry developed in pro-

portion to the appreciative women they meet. A rustic maiden, however charming in her freshness, would be utterly insensible to the delicate homage language might convey to a woman of the world. Gallantry then quickly invents modes of pleasing both the unsophisticated ear and the highly-cultured one. Yet, to admit that a passion is natural, does not mean that it is natural to everybody. A man may possess sterling traits or a brilliant intellect, while wholly deficient in gallantry. "What shall I talk about to those women? We have nothing in common. I cannot assume an interest in their affairs, and they have none in mine." So he responds when reproached with being "so indifferent, so cold in manner." Perhaps he calls his want of gallantry "honesty," "sincerity," not without a certain consciousness of superiority over other men, who say "things they do not mean, merely to please feminine ears." But here is the point where discrimination and refinement are available.

Women like pleasing compliments, but they are repulsed by coarse flattery. A plain woman knows every lack, every blemish in her own person as well as if it belonged to another. Her esthetic perceptions criticize it with the same sense of dissatisfaction. If, then, a man tell her that she is very beautiful, she resents it. It is an insult both to her understanding and to her sensibilities. But, if he show her by manner or speech that he admires the womanhood in her, that her thoughts and feelings are attractive to his mental nature, she is reconciled to her want of personal charms.

No, no—dear honored men of "sterling traits" or

"brilliant intellect," do not think we can be satisfied with those things alone! We admire them, I grant; but our admiration is much stronger, much warmer, when we find gallantry besides. If you have not this qualification I am sorry for you,—it is not your fault. Doubtless, you often think women very weak, rather silly even, because they like to hear pretty speeches, and like to be waited upon and taken care of in countless wholly needless ways. But what seems folly to you may be something very different to some other men—and to nearly all women.

Oriental women lose self-respect if they are not guarded with strictness befitting their rank. The more they are watched, the more they feel their worth and influence. Yet, this is not to say that all Oriental women who feel thus are beautiful. On the contrary, some very plain ones are much beloved, and wield great power over their lords. Upon the same principle—woman-nature it must be—women of a different civilization lay claim to chivalrous treatment. They do not want to be locked in, guarded and restricted, surrounded by slaves or spies. But they need proofs, forcible and oft-repeated ones, that their individuality is something to be sued for, to be contended for, and when won, to be jealously preserved.

Indeed, if you are not naturally gallant it is a pity, for you lose a great deal—and so do we. Still, much can be done by culture if you feel heartily interested in the thing to be acquired. If you do not so feel, if you see no need for being other than you are, your appeal to art will be useless. Art does imitate Nature sometimes very successfully. In acting, for instance, the illusion may be so perfect as to thrill

us with delight or transfix us with horror. Every faculty of the mind and heart may in turn be excited or soothed at the actor's pleasure. And the same kind of art is manifested by the orator. He sways his audience with so potent a magic that they forget everything save the facts and the imagery his will sets forth in language. So with the pen. Art enables it to give forth pages glowing with Nature's colors, palpitating with her innate forces. Intellect, Heart, Soul—the omnipotent trinity which all the world worships—illumine the written words at the command of Art. But there can be no Art—no imitation of Nature—without imagination, that which transports the self out of itself.

So in gallantry. Our knights may be deficient in the quality we so like simply through lack of imagination. In this case a man might have mental ability and kind feelings, while wholly unable to seize a situation, anticipate its desire or need. Having no power of adaptation, he cannot give pleasure even when animated by the wish. He feels his inadequacy to meet his companion's wants, while the mode of overcoming it remains unsuspected. He may see the tattered garment or hunger-pinched features, and be moved to a noble generosity: this while utterly unable to see in other cases the human need of suavity, of sympathy, of tenderness. Such a man is respected, but not liked, by women. There are times when a courteous listening to commonplace gossip or childish prattle is as effective a stroke of gallantry from man to woman as protection from wrong.

Men having direct worldly interests at stake quickly discover how to win the good graces of women. Sales-

men who are most patient, most deferential, make the greatest number of sales. Ministers who take a vital interest in the little things which constitute so large a part of woman's life may be sure of zealous adherents to their doctrines, of warm personal friendship. Lawyers who listen graciously to the most illogical of statements, sedulously concealing the shrug of impatience or the gesture of fatigue, inspire the most confidence in female clients. The physician who looks kindly and speaks gently, evincing sincere sympathy in the minutest details of his patient's case, quickly gains her suffrages. Women respect fame, they admire skill; but, whenever possible, they let personality outweigh both fame and admiration. Yet, not all of these men who find it to their interests to practise patience and suavity towards women are possessed of imagination. So that we see very clearly how a well-defined motive can bring forth, if not gallantry itself, yet so good a semblance as to be highly serviceable.

That court-life fosters gallantry is not to be disputed: but to wish for a court for the sake of gallantry would be extremely irrational. Yet, women all like the pleasant things inspired by this passion, are, indeed, disposed to claim them as a natural right. To encourage, then, what is manifestly for the good of both sexes, becomes a part of our social creed at once agreeable and justifiable. For my part, I cannot imagine a woman not admiring strength, in whatever form it appear. It implies the brave soldier, the good sailor, the clever artisan, the steady workman; it indicates the earnest preacher, the eloquent lawyer, the enthu-

siastic scientist; it shows the kingly merchant, the adventurous explorer, the inspired orator. These are the knights of active life. In the realm of Letters, we find strength manifested in the historian, in the biographer, in the essayist; find it in the master of fiction, in the poet, in the philosopher.

Nor can I imagine a man not admiring beauty in woman in whatever way apparent. In one, it is in symmetry of features, in perfection of form, in exquisite coloring. In another, it is goodness of heart joined to a graciousness of manner which enhances the goodness to illimitable proportions. In another, it is culture of intellect at once wide and deep, but so daintily enclosed in modesty and gentleness that it repels any imputation of either coldness or would-be competition with masculine minds. In yet another, it is the clinging affection that finds complete felicity in conjugal and maternal love. In another, it is the pure essence of self-denial which flows from the life of a woman debarred from the natural play of her affections, but devoting herself to a noble work of philanthropy, of education, or of art.

In brief, strength and beauty are always ready to interchange worship. And this—aided in men by all the attributes of courage, knowledge, and experience, in women, by those of trust, tenderness, and devotion—brings about those relations which reach their highest round of worth in knighthood and in ladyhood.

Gallantry is often put to severe tests. Women of warm sensibilities are liable to be carried into positions which they themselves, in moments of reflection, recognize as untenable. At the time, how-

ever, they want to be there, insist upon it with feminine petulance. They "see no reason why" they cannot have the thing they ask of their chosen knight, whether it be a letter, a walk, a visit, a talk. Yet, men may see many reasons why the granting of a woman's wish might work mischief. Gallantry impels to gratification: judgment withholds the gift which would injure.

Imagine yourself a lover, one ardent enough for the most loving of women. Gallant by nature as you are, you yet marvel at the augmented courtesy Love brings. Not a day, not an hour that it does not long to give some new manifestation. The woman who for the time being personates to you the sweet goddess, is incessantly in your thoughts, in your feelings, in your soul. You cannot escape the spell thrown round you by fate. Reason has no part in it, this you know, this you even admit,—but without in the least altering your condition. You cannot forget your love—you do not wish to forget—you think it the divinest essence Nature can yield. You are daring, you are reckless, you are possessed. Being this, you take any risks, expose yourself to any danger, rush headlong into any adventure—you fear nothing. This, as concerns yourself.

But, lo, there is another side to the question—a woman's fair name to consider! You are a knight, well versed in all the arts of knighthood. You are brave, enduring, high-spirited. Added to and greatly increasing your natural mettle is this dominating passion. You feel yourself capable of overcoming every obstacle, vanquishing every enemy; but you do not put forth the power you hold within your grasp—



you bear in mind the woman! For her sake, you deny yourself the dearest rights. For, while you might take without hesitation or scruple all that Love offers, she, the woman, could not take it without painful protest and subsequent self-reproaches. And as a true knight, have you not sworn to protect the weak, to succor the distressed, to redress the wronged?

Womanhood is sacred to you. It is all that mother, sister, wife, daughter, personate to you of beauty and goodness. Love, then, does not undermine your reverence for woman. You cannot hold yourself responsible for the shaft sent into your heart,—that came without warning in a moment when you were wholly unconscious of danger. But in the service of chivalry you endure pain, you resist attack upon a weaker mortal even at the cost of your own life-blood. This you do, and do it without parade of your feelings or courage, without seeking so much as a look or a word from the woman you shield. She, too, has been struck by a shaft from the same cunning marksman who, spite of blindness, never once misses his aim. And the wound will not heal so long as her thoughts go back to that fairy-land sung by Heine, there

“Wo alle Bäume sprechen  
Und singen, wie ein Chor,  
Und laute Quellen brechen  
Wie Tanzmusik hervor;—

“Und Liebesweisen tönen,  
Wie du sie nie gehört,  
Bis wundersüßes Sehnen  
Dich wunder süß bethört.”

Living over the past, lingering in every scene, in every incident, in every word, in every mute moment

—too eloquent for speech—all the present seems cold and lifeless. Her demonstrations are not as vehement as yours; but less outflow means more inward pressure.

She is disturbed by the clear thinking which ranges facts and possibilities side by side in unmistakable order. The situation mars her peace, harasses self-consciousness. She resolves to escape from the heavy atmosphere of doubt; determines to pierce the subtleties which insensibly have led her into specious deductions. But when did resolve and self-promises ever prevent a woman wounded by Love from running into danger? And this woman displays all the waywardness of that bitter-sweet malady. Saying “no!” she acts “yes!” Vowing “never again!” she yet murmurs “just once more!” whenever the incense is proffered. And, notwithstanding deep chagrin at the weakness her mind discerns, she gradually verges towards imprudence, towards treacherous ground.

At this crisis, you, O gallant knight, come to her rescue. Your brain is stronger, your arm is stronger: your heart, even when wounded, is true to its native principle—loyalty to woman. With the full power of your will merged in action, you encounter the anomalous conditions which environ your enslaved princess, and with one resolute blow break the enchantment.

The effect is instantaneous. All is over—all save a memory for both knight and lady. Yet, as the fitting reward of chivalry, there comes to you from the fair lady's hands a pure-white silken banner inscribed in letters of gold with the words: Woman's hero is he who loves her most and honors her most.











